

**STAGING THE CRIMINALISED SOCIETY: CONTEMPORARY SOUTH
AFRICAN
THEATRE'S RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL INSECURITY CAUSED BY
VIOLENT CRIME
IN SOUTH AFRICA OVER THE PAST DECADE (2002 - 2012)**

By

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The potential to fall victim to violent crime is an ever-present threat in contemporary South African society that many South Africans have resigned themselves to. It is also one of the few aspects of South African society that is common to all races, genders, cultures, locations, and socio-economic backgrounds. It is a popular topic of public debate and violent crime regularly features in all forms of news media. However, this prevalence is not mirrored in the original theatre productions that have been created since the crime wave began in the early 1990s.

The aim of this study is to investigate and find ways to categorise the South African plays that have been created in response to the crime problem. It will highlight patterns in this body of work that could be used by theatre-makers and scholars to understand this subject matter, how it is being received by South African audiences and how theatre-makers have approached the creative process of generating work responding to this theme thus far.

This research study primarily makes use of empirical information collected from a combination of watching the selected plays, reading their scripts and reading reviews of these productions. This study also makes use of information obtained from various publications in the fields of criminology, psychology and sociology, as well as information gathered from newspaper articles and the statistics released by agencies such as the Institute for Security Studies and Stats SA. In order to discuss how portrayals of violent crimes are choreographed and how these portrayals affect viewers/ consumers.

Through an analysis of the data on the South African crime wave that emerges from these various sources, a picture begins to emerge of a generally misunderstood phenomenon that is unique to South African society; crime rates are undoubtedly high, but the 'crime wave', appears to have more to do with perceptions than with rising incidences of violent crime.

This is reflected in the theatrical engagement with the crime wave thus far; it is as diverse as are the perceptions of the prevalence of violent crime in South Africa.

OPSOMMING

Die potensiaal om 'n slagoffer van misdaad te word, is vandag 'n alomteenwoordige realiteit en vir baie Suid-Afrikaners is dit onvermydelik. Dit is ook een van die min ervarings in Suid-Afrika wat elke ras, geslag, kultuurgroep en sosiaal-ekonomiese agtergrond tref. Misdadigheid is ook 'n gewilde onderwerp van bespreking en is gereeld op die voorgrond in die media. Die toneelstukke wat egter sedert die opkoms van die misdaadgolf opgevoer is, verteenwoordig nie die gewildheid van die gesprek oor die misdaadgolf nie.

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing is om die Suid-Afrikaanse opvoerings wat geskep is as 'n reaksie teen die misdaadprobleem te ondersoek en te kategoriseer sodat teaterakademikuste en -praktisyne die probleem van misdaad in Suid-Afrika beter kan verstaan; asook hoe teatergangers die toneelstukke ervaar en hoe teaterpraktisyne die kreatiewe skepping van nuwe werke oor die misdaadprobleem tot dusver behandel het.

Hierdie navorsingsprojek maak meestal gebruik van empiriese inligting oor die gekose toneelstukke wat versamel is deur 'n kombinasie van die draaiboek en resensies te lees, en teaterbesoeke af te lê. Hierdie navorsing maak ook gebruik van inligting wat verkry is in die studieverde van kriminologie, sielkunde en sosiologie boeke en artikels, sowel as koerante en statistieke wat deur die Instituut vir Veiligheidsnavorsing en Stats SA beskikbaar gestel is. Hoe die vertonings van geweld op die verhoog uitgebeeld is en hoe hierdie vertonings die teatergangers affekteer word laastens bespreek.

Deur die deeglike ondersoek van al hierdie vorms van data oor die Suid-Afrikaanse misdaadgolf, kan dit duidelik erken word dat die misdaadgolf verkeerd begryp is en dat dit uniek aan Suid-Afrika is. Misdadigheid en die gevolge daarvan is beslis 'n buitengewone gemeenskapsprobleem, maar die uitgebreide gesprek oor misdadigheid is blykbaar meer beïnvloed deur waarnemings as deur werklike gevalle van gewelddadige misdaad.

Suid-Afrikaanse teater wat geskep is as 'n reaksie teen die misdaadprobleem weerspieël die diversiteit van verskillende ervarings van die misdaadgolf in Suid-Afrika.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Preliminary study and rationale

This study emerged out of my interest in understanding the singular nature of the perceived rise in violent crime in South Africa after 1994 (referred to as ‘the crime wave’), the experiences of individuals living in this criminalised¹ society, and how theatre-makers have engaged with these social phenomena. I witnessed several adverse reactions that audience members displayed in response to simulated criminal acts in productions of contemporary plays that attempted to represent/reflect certain aspects of living in South Africa related specifically to navigating the risks and perceived risks of falling victim to violent crime. These reactions struck me as being emotional responses to the action that distressed the audience members in question, which were not shared by other members of the audience (myself included) and that suggested that the audience members in question may have experienced a traumatic interaction with crimes similar to those being staged. This sparked my interest in how theatre depicting crime or insecurity related to fear of crime could affect audiences in a criminalised society with high rates of victimisation.

The first encounter which piqued my interest in how staging the criminalised society might affect previously victimised audience members happened in 2007 when I was a third-year drama student and I was invited to watch a performance of *6 Mins*, Peter Van Heerden’s commissioned work on child abuse for the 2007 FNB (First National Bank) Dance Umbrella. The performance was a site-specific installation which took place in various rooms in the Tamboerskloof battery, in Cape Town, where Van Heerden had his studio. The action took place in small enclosed spaces which the audience shared with the performers. At one point there was a very graphic depiction of a rape against a wall where the audience was standing. A female first-year student had a very emotional and distressed response to this and had to be assisted outside by a few of her classmates. The lecturers and students present seemed to be caught off guard by her extreme reaction to the simulated sexual assault. I became aware of the fact that none of us had been warned about the content of the performance or asked whether or not we felt comfortable viewing material of that nature.

¹ The term criminalised society is understood to refer to a society where criminality is seemingly beyond the control of the police and where citizens feel that their safety is dependent on their own efforts to ensure it, rather than being the responsibility of law enforcement. It does not refer to a criminal state where state-sanctioned violations are taking place - the exploitation of one group of the population in favour of another. Rather, it refers to a state where the police do not possess the resources to adequately prevent crime.

My interest in how South African theatre-makers have been staging the criminalised society was first piqued by reading David Peimer's anthology *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa* (2009) as part of my Honours course. It is a collection of plays that respond to the 'crime wave' in South Africa, specifically people's heightened feelings of fear and anxiety as a result of it. David Peimer and Martina Griller's play *Armed Response* is also part of the collection, which I will discuss in greater detail later on in my literature review. The book that first piqued my interest in understanding the experiences of those living in the criminalised society was *Portrait with Keys* (2006) by Ivan Vladislavic, which was one of the prescribed books on a reading list that I read for an English Literature course. The book is a combination of fiction and non-fiction and is made up of several short pieces of writing or 'segments' which can be read in more than one order. At the back of the book there are 'itineraries' which organise the 'segments' into different sequential narrative orders depending on the theme which the reader wishes to explore. The story behind the title of Vladislavic's *Portrait with Keys* comes from an interview he did with a Swedish reporter at his home, which is one of the 'segments' included in the book (2006: 122 – 123). The interviewer was fascinated by the large number of keys in the bunch that Vladislavic had used to let her into his home. She commented that only janitors in her country needed such an extensive number of keys. Most individuals in Sweden would not require that many locks to secure their property so would not require that many keys. This fascinated Vladislavic, who had never given any thought to his bunch of keys before her comment. The reporter was sceptical when Vladislavic then explained to her that for most South Africans that was the standard or average number of keys to have on your bunch. This simple exchange highlighted a curious condition of life in South Africa for me: for most people living in the city, security (of oneself and one's property) is particularly important, but this need is taken for granted as being part and parcel of everyday life. It is only when we look at this behaviour from a foreigner's point of view that we notice how bizarre and restrictive some of our habits and practices actually are.

The 'itinerary' called "Security/ Insecurity" really launched my passionate interest in the conventions of security that South Africans have adopted and how strange they must seem to visitors to the country. It reminded me that many behaviours, conventions and attitudes that we as South Africans take for granted about our daily lives are very bizarre indeed. It made me think: why are we not more outraged about the so-called 'crime wave' and the way it has restricted our constitutional freedoms and rights? As an emerging theatre-maker, my immediate response was that something needs to be done about this.

In 2011 I began an artistic engagement with these nodes of interest when I wrote and staged a crime thriller titled *Pocket Shots*, which explored a flawed police investigation into a suspicious murder. I interviewed several police detectives at the local police stations in my area, including the Chief of Detectives in the sector, as part of my research into crime and how it is investigated which highlighted certain discrepancies in how crime in our area was being reported to the public, how the public perceived crime in our area, and the nature of the crimes that the police actually had to investigate. It was at this point that my research for the production expanded to include more factual data on crime incidences and publications by criminologists studying the South African crime wave. I found this immersive research to be an illuminating and helpful source of information for the development of my production.

The experience which had the most significant influence on my interest in theatre's complicity in staging the criminalised South Africa and the effects that these depictions can have on audience members happened during the second performance of *Pocket Shots*. Right before curtain up, the theatre manager announced to the audience that someone's car had just been stolen out of the parking lot. I could see the audience from backstage, but they could not see me. I observed the entire energy of the room change from casual anticipation of an entertaining performance to flurried panic. Some members who recognised the description given of the stolen car rushed outside to check if it had been their car. After ten minutes, the theatre manager suggested that we start the show and the victim's family members returned to watch while she waited outside for the police to respond.

The atmosphere was unusually sombre in the audience, despite the many comedic moments in the play. It was particularly noticeable during the burglary scene (a camp and comical dance routine where glitter-masked burglars ransack the main character's home) when audiences at other performances had typically laughed; this particular audience seemingly held its breath. This uncanny response troubled me as I suspected that the stealing of a car beforehand had made a caricatured robbery too distressing to be funny. In the week following this incident, the woman whose car had been stolen returned to watch the play, and I paid particular attention (once again from backstage) to her reaction to the burglary scene. The rest of the audience laughed and enjoyed the action, but the woman appeared to be quietly crying throughout the scene. This phenomenon reminded me of the first-year student's reaction whilst watching *6 Mins* several years earlier. It occurred to me that, particularly in a society traumatised by violent crime, there may be a need for theatre-makers to have guidelines or recommendations to assist with the sensitive/ethical staging of violent criminal acts or requirements for warning audiences of potentially upsetting content. The immersive research that I conducted as part of the development of *Pocket Shots* was my response as an emerging theatre-maker to the audience member's reaction to *6 Mins*;

and my further response to the audience member's reaction to *Pocket Shots* was to apply the research I had already conducted and the methodologies that I had already used towards an extended discussion about how the theatrical depictions of the experiences of those living in the criminalised society in contemporary South African theatre can affect audiences.

Several questions thus became critical to this discussion: What impact do violent crimes in South Africa have on the daily lives of its citizens? How is this impact addressed in local contemporary theatre? On the literary front, both locally and internationally, crime novels have rapidly gained popularity with a seemingly constant demand for the latest, distinctly South African, crime thriller or suspense novel. Crime is certainly a very popular theme internationally in film, television, art and literature. But, the question of how contemporary South African theatre is handling the national perceptions of the violent crime problem remains to be critically explored or investigated. I realised that in order to embark on an investigation of this nature, I would first need to understand how the perceptions of violent crime in this country operate which led me to conduct research in areas such as sociology and criminology.

I discovered that there is no unified South African experience of violent crime. As research (Shaw, 2002; Collins, 2013) indicates, after twenty years of democratic freedom, South Africa remains a highly polarised society; and while the divisions are no longer officially (or most obviously) along race lines, since 1994 they appear to have re-formed along class lines. The townships (under-resourced and overcrowded areas previously designated for black residents by the apartheid government, and still present in post-apartheid South Africa) still have minimal access to police services, making them more vulnerable to criminal activity (Shaw, 2002). On the other hand, the residents in affluent neighbourhoods can afford private security measures. They also have assets of greater value to criminals, which makes them more vulnerable to criminal activity of a violent nature as criminals are motivated to employ a greater use of force to overcome security measures such as alarms and electrified fences.

My preliminary research also demonstrated that 'violence' is not a single act that has the same purpose, execution or outcome in every instance.

We can't talk about 'violence' for long without needing to apply categories and there are many different directions from which the subject can be viewed. We can classify violence as physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, intellectual or spiritual. We can categorise it by scale: from a fight between two people to a battle or war. Violence can be considered from the perspective of its cause (what motivates it), its form or its effects. We can think about the way that it is contextualised or regulated (Nevitt, 2013: 4–5).

Dictionary.com² defines 'Violence' as "swift and intense force", "rough or injurious physical force, action, or treatment", "an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power, as against rights or laws" or "rough or immoderate vehemence, as of feeling or language" ("violence", n.d.). While it is often associated with physical violence or force, violence could as easily refer to rough verbal or emotional treatment. In *Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict* (2009), Anderson and Menon suggest that "violence is a binding, affective experience that cross-cuts the domains traditionally registered and distinguished as the physical, the psychic, and the social" (2009: 5). Aside from the myriad effects that violence can have on both victims and perpetrators, 'violence' as a subject can be further delineated according to its intended purpose: it can be used as a means of jesting, injuring, inciting or devastating; it can be justified, sanctioned, ordered, prejudicial, random, accidental, employed for the good of the public, for criminal purposes or for self-delusional motivations.³ All of these different forms of, and motivations for, violence occur in very different circumstances and operate in very different ways. It is therefore important for any investigation involving an aspect of violence to be clear about which particular forms of violence are under discussion. The focus of this study is violence as it relates to crime, which includes violent crime, violent intervention by police in alleged crime prevention, and violent measures used by private citizens to protect themselves or their property from crime.

A third concern that came to my attention was the matter of how perceptions about violence and crime are influenced by external stimuli such as the media, friends and family, and government statements and statistics. According to various social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and the discussion threads in the comments sections of online news articles, South Africans are particularly fond of comparing the annually released government

² The Dictionary.com definition was chosen after a comparative search of other popular reference dictionaries - such as the Oxford English Dictionary and Webster's Dictionary - failed to provide definitions that would help to advance this study's foundational understanding of what violence is and how it operates.

³ This refers specifically to incidences involving people who are psychologically disturbed and behave outside of the parameters of what can be considered to be 'normal society'. Their actions may seem justifiable to them, but would seem unacceptable and deviant according to the law and public opinion. The behaviour of psychopathic and sociopathic individuals therefore falls well outside of the ambit of this study.

statistics on reported crime rates from around the country.⁴ It has become somewhat of a national pastime to rank provinces and cities according to the number of crimes committed in the last year, and the surmised level of danger citizens of the various locales are in, among other factors revealed by these statistics. Of course, as is often the case with statistics, these figures are not completely accurate and therefore neither are some of the conclusions that are drawn from them. For example, these statistics are often erroneously taken by the general public to suggest the number of crimes *committed* in South Africa, despite the fact that they are based on the number of crimes *reported*. The statistics also make no allowances for errors in the recording of crimes by the police, or for incidents reported to the police for insurance purposes that are not necessarily criminal acts at all (although this detail is seldom reported when the statistics are released by the media). Perceptions are also heavily influenced by the reports of violent crime in the media. Reports are seemingly in every news bulletin/newspaper edition and are always accompanied by, now familiar, evocative language or imagery designed to play up the sensational element of these crimes (Shaw, 2002). The constant barrage of reported cases of criminal aggression has desensitised many South Africans to the true horror and injustice of the actual events, which has resulted in some people feeling helpless in the face of criminality and in some cases terrified of the society they live in.⁵

Perceptions of violent crime in South Africa are diverse amongst the general populace; add to that the varied responses that these perceptions elicit and what emerges is a vast and dynamic system of reactions to a particular societal problem. In 2013, for example, there was a controversy that sparked a national debate over the inclusion of a question in the matric dramatic arts exam paper: the play *Tshepang: The Third Testament* (hereafter referred to as *Tshepang*)⁶ - written by Lara Foot Newton in 2003 and published in 2005 - features the symbolic rape of a baby and the learners (some as young as 17 years old) were asked how they would stage this action, were they to direct the production. Several learners reported being traumatised by the question (Nair & Louw, 2013; Singh, 2013). Reports stated that these learners were victims of child abuse and rape and should not have had to relive their trauma in an exam (Nair & Louw, 2013). Some people, the playwright included, felt that the material was too advanced for teenagers to be discussing in the isolated

⁴ This idea is also reflected in the research of criminologists discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, but the scope and characteristics of the debate are more evident in the opinions expressed informally on social media than in formal, academic research of the public response (including Victim Surveys).

⁵ How crime statistics are gathered, collated, reported and interpreted by South Africans will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter Two. It is a complicated and often misunderstood aspect of the South African crime wave and the influence that this process has on South African society and how people understand the criminalised nature of South African society is very important.

⁶ This play is one of the productions under discussion in this study and more details are provided on the production's history, themes and reception in Chapter Four.

environment of a written exam (Davis, 2013; Ferguson, 2013; Nair & Louw, 2013; Singh, 2013) and others felt that the question was an inappropriate one for teenagers to have to answer in order to achieve a pass mark. It remains a contentious issue.⁷

How then have contemporary South African theatre-makers depicted this complex and dynamic system of responses that can be classified as 'living in a criminalised society'? Have their efforts been perceived as successful; or more significantly, how has the success of their plays/performances been measured? For example, does vociferous critical engagement determine success in this regard, or commercial viability? Is favourable reception from South African audiences a measure of success, or favourable reception from international audiences, or both? Although the desired outcome of staging such a play will differ according to the theatre-maker, director, playwright or performers in question, the central hypothesis of this study is that theatre and drama practitioners should be sensitive to/ethically accountable when creating and/or staging work that in any way addresses violent crime in South Africa. This is because they are uniquely positioned to influence perceptions about the causes and impact of South Africa's high violent crime rates tangibly and can affect society's efforts to address them. This study also proposes that theatre and drama practitioners should reflect on how their staging of simulated acts of criminal violence emotionally and psychologically affects their performers and audience members particularly in a traumatised, transitioning and criminalised society such as South Africa.

1.2 Literature review

1.2.1 Armed Response: Plays from South Africa

Armed Response: Plays from South Africa, by David Peimer, was the starting point of my investigation into contemporary South African theatre practitioners' efforts to deal with the human experience of living in a society gripped by a 'crime wave'⁸ while recovering from a violent past. This book is a collection of original South African plays dealing with the various expressions of insecurity that form part of the experience of living in contemporary South Africa. The book also features an introduction on the development of South African theatre over the last thirty years or so and how it came about that violence, crime, safety, fear and social insecurity have become such important issues in present-day South Africa.

⁷ Refer to Chapter Four for a discussion around the staging of the violent rape of a baby in *Tshepang* and the audience reception of this action.

⁸ The South African crime wave is curiously atypical to the trend in reported crime that is defined by criminologists as being a 'crime wave'. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, but it should be noted that what is commonly discussed as 'the crime wave' in South Africa is not what is actually understood by those in criminology to be a crime wave. It will appear from here on without quotation marks, but should be understood to be a term inaccurately ascribed to the criminalised society in South Africa, but used commonly nonetheless.

I have only ever read the plays featured in *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa* and can, therefore, only offer my personal impressions on them as works of literature. This study relies heavily on secondary sources - comments from others about and criticisms of the performances of the plays discussed from this anthology - and any conclusions that are drawn about how these texts relate to the ideas under discussion are acknowledged as limited in scope. *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa* features the plays *Relativity: Township Stories* by Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom and Presley Chweneyagae, *Bush Tale* by Martin Koboekae, *Hallelujah* by Xoli Norman, *Reach* by Lara Foot Newton and *Armed Response* by David Peimer and Martina Griller. *Bush Tale* by Martin Koboekae and *Hallelujah* by Xoli Norman will not be discussed in this study, as their themes have very little connection to the central focus or research aims of this study.

Relativity: Township Stories portrays a harsh township environment rife with poverty and violence.⁹ It follows several characters entangled in an investigation into several rapes and murders in the area. The play features several violent and sexual interactions that were described as being graphically enacted in the various productions of this play, as is Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom's style of theatre-making. Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom directed the first production and mentored Tsepo Wa Mamatu who directed the second production. This gratuitous violence and explicit simulated sex on stage have earned the playwrights the nickname, "township Tarantinos" (Peimer, 2009). *Relativity: Township Stories* is a brutal portrayal of life in a contemporary township, highlighting the relationships between poverty, violence and sex. Lara Foot Newton's *Reach* is a two-hander dealing with an unusual encounter between two individuals mutually mistrustful of one another. The invisible force drawing them together is their individual experience of a violent crime that has affected both of their lives to the point that they are 'stuck' and unable to move on. *Reach* makes reference to numerous popular sentiments about crime, criminals, criminality, police and the individual's safety in South African society, but does not feature any overt crimes or staged violence of any sort. There are very few plays in this study that feature no staged criminal acts, and yet manage to portray the unique anxieties that South Africans - from more than one socio-economic group – have regarding their daily interactions with the risk of potential victimisation, as *Reach* does. It is therefore of particular interest.

⁹ In South Africa the word 'township' is used to refer to low-income areas on the outskirts of cities and towns that are a combination of formal and informal housing. It is understood to refer to areas set up by the apartheid government to keep black citizens who were working in the urban environment away from the city centres and residential areas occupied by white citizens. As such, it is also understood that these areas have limited or reduced infrastructure and amenities, which (combined with the systemic poverty often found in these neighbourhoods) facilitates high levels of criminal victimisation.

Armed Response, by Peimer and Griller, is an exploration of safety in the suburbs and the role private security firms have to play in this. The premise is one that has actually been the reality for some South Africans; a private security company called Armed Response hires a team of thugs to harass homeowners in an area and intimidate them into purchasing the services of Armed Response to ensure their safety. It highlights the fact that in South Africa, fear and the constant discourse around crime and safety affects the actions people take in their day-to-day life, as much as the actual instances of criminal behaviour. This is particularly true for middle-class citizens and is particularly true in the suburbs.

1.2.2 Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict

Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict (2009) edited by Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon is considered to be a key text for theatre scholars investigating the performance studies approach to violence (Nevitt, 2013: 77). Anderson and Menon suggest several factors to take into consideration when discussing violence in terms of a performed act, and how global spectatorship and small-scale spectatorship of violent acts has affected how individuals/people worldwide understand and discuss violence (as a theme) and violent events in the twenty-first century.

This collection reflects recent developments over the last decade, which has witnessed a shift from studying violence within plays to understanding the performative role of violence in socio-cultural contexts. This theoretical shift from the paradigm of theatre to performance has crucially altered the field contours and objects of study. Most notably, performance studies has ventured outside of the traditional theatrical space to explore various other forms of representation – film, television, photography, and the written word, among others – and has expanded, by re-imagining the very concept of performance and offering sustained political critiques of our modern world (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 3).

According to their research, discussions about violence need to move out of the realm of theatre studies or media studies and into the realm of performance studies. This study proposes that, in the South African context, violence be approached from a perspective in flux somewhere between the two fields. Anderson and Menon also suggest that in post-modern culture, discussions about concepts such as violence are inherently intertextual and that there is enough research at this point to advocate that an interdisciplinary approach to understanding, discussing and representing violence is the only way to properly explore the indivisible influences that media studies, sociological research, performance studies and theatre studies have on one another in this context (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 1–5).

Catherine M. Cole's chapter on the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) proved to be the most relevant in the book in terms of performance studies, and was enlightening with regards to the muted response South Africans seem to have to acts of violence and injustice.¹⁰ She highlights performance elements of the proceedings such as the staging, structure, rules of behaviour for certain role players and the unexpected, uncontrollable 'outbursts' of raw human emotions that interrupted the proceedings of the TRC hearings on several notable occasions. These performance events have been suggested by André Brink and others to have had a diminishing effect on South African theatre being produced at the time; in the face of such real, raw and affective expressions of human experience, the simulated human experience presented by the theatre seemed a trivial and pale impersonation of the truth. Brink suggests that the TRC hearings intimidated theatre-makers by presenting a mode beyond the capabilities of their form: "The theatrical imagination finds it difficult to compete with this drama of reality" (Brink, 1997: 174). The book, in general, does not make reference to the forms of violence experienced in South Africa as part of the criminalised nature of society or the effects of these forms of violence, but it does highlight the importance of the correlation between performance studies and theatre studies when discussing or representing themes like crime, justice, violence, safety, ownership, human rights and freedoms; concepts which are critical to understanding the culture and national psyche in South Africa. Our ideas about the crime rates and our safety are indivisibly linked to media coverage of crimes and our shared personal experiences of crimes. Our views on violence and the role of the police force in defending us from harm are inextricably linked to our history: more than twenty years ago the police were not tasked with *equally* defending *all* members of the public from crime; rather, they were a militarised force whose task it was to protect a selective group of citizens and to oppress, intimidate, torture and kill the other citizens (Shaw, 2002). And whether we realise it or not, some of our views on justice have been uniquely influenced by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the compromises that the interim government had to make in the negotiations to peacefully dismantle and hand over power in the early nineties.

1.2.3 Theatre & Violence

Theatre & Violence (2013) by Lucy Nevitt is part of the 'Theatre&' series that explores theatre in the context of various themes. In this volume she covers how violence has influenced theatre, how theatre has allegedly influenced instances of violence, and the various methods and potential effects of staging violence. Nevitt is adamant in this book that

¹⁰ This idea that South Africans have a muted response to reports of certain violent acts is discussed in journal articles such as "Violence is not a crime: The impact of 'acceptable' violence on South African society" (2013) by Anthony Collins and "Anger, hatred, or just heartlessness? Defining gratuitous violence" (2010b) by David Bruce, both of which can be found in the journal *South African Crime Quarterly*.

the choices theatre-makers and directors make about how violent acts are staged should be thoroughly examined and interrogated, particularly by the artists themselves. She makes mention of several instances where portrayals of violence on stage proved to be questionable with only a precursory analysis. Her section on the portrayal of rape on stage was particularly interesting, given the current debate in South Africa on the disturbingly high rates of sexual offences throughout the country (particularly the excessive nature of violent force used, where most victims are also brutally killed) and what should be done to minimise them. Nevitt seems to suggest that the varying depictions of rape in the examples she mentions were quite problematic: they seemed to re-enforce, rather than challenge, certain misconceptions about rape, which underplays the seriousness of the violation and the effects it has on its victims (Nevitt, 2013: 34). Her assertion is that staging violence should not be approached by directors and theatre-makers as merely an exercise in following stage directions or arranging actors' bodies on stage, but as a most important statement about the artist's personal views on violence in relation to the conventional societal views on that form of violence. In the South African context, it would seem that this approach is especially necessary, particularly if theatre-makers wish to be active participants in the national debate around what is to be done about the proliferation of rape, murder and other forms of violent crime. While *Theatre & Violence* is a comprehensive overview of all the ways that violence can be staged, as well as the impact violence in theatre can have on audiences, it is not specifically about theatre and violent crime. It touches briefly on rape, as has been mentioned, but does not cover the full range of violent crimes and certainly does not relate theatre to the unique social environment of crime and its reception that exists in South Africa. However, the discussion is useful as this study will follow Nevitt's example and pursue an analysis of the staging of violent crime and how it affects individuals in South Africa.

1.2.4 Facing the Stranger in the Mirror: Staged complicities in recent South African performances

In her article "Facing the Stranger in the Mirror: Staged complicities in recent South African performances" (2011), Miki Flockemann introduces the notion of complicity as one of the most prevalent trends in contemporary South African theatre. She considers complicity as a theme in theatre in general: audience complicity in the theatrical event, and the theatre-maker's complicity in re-enforcing or opposing hegemony through their choice of material and the presentation thereof. Flockemann explores each of these three aspects quite briefly, but the article still foregrounds this framework of analysis thoroughly, clearly demonstrating the inter-relatedness of these functions of complicity. Of particular interest to this study are the sections on audience complicity, the theatre-makers' treatment of audience complicity,

and the influence of the theatre-makers' complicities on the creative development of their work. Flockemann champions the importance of theatre-makers interrogating their own complicities and the ways in which these impact on their creative choices and how these choices affect audiences. She quotes Kelly Oliver to expand on this notion of critical self-reflection:

We can never stop interrogating our notions of justice, democracy and freedom, which means we can never stop asking ourselves why we do what we do, why we value what we value, why we desire what we desire, why we fear what we fear (in Flockemann, 2011: 131).

1.2.5 South African Theatre Beyond 2000: Theatricalising the Unspeakable

Marcia Blumberg's article "South African Theatre Beyond 2000: Theatricalising the Unspeakable" (2009) describes a collection of plays and theatrical events produced between 2002 and 2008, a period which she refers to as "the second interregnum" (Blumberg, p.240). The article endeavours to present a broad range of engaging theatre that emerged during this period and which challenged issues critical to post-apartheid South Africa. Blumberg focuses on theatre productions that were innovative in their subject matter, or handling of their subject matter, and that were well-received or critically acclaimed. In this way, the article reveals theatre-makers' preoccupations at the time, and reveals Blumberg's admiration of the bold engagement with contemporary social issues facing South Africa in this last decade. As a result of her interviews with the playwrights or directors involved, she provides both an explanation of the artists' complicity in the stances their work took to the societal issues at hand, as well as an impression of the audiences' complicity in the performance taken from her own personal experience as audience member. Blumberg's article can be seen as a brief application of complicity as a theoretical framework to analyse South African theatre, which Flockemann further develops in her article. Blumberg's use of the term 'complicity' is not as overt as Flockemann's, but they are certainly referring to the same thing. In both of the personal experiences highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, I saw similarities between how Blumberg described her experience as complicitous audience member and my own experiences. This complicity and my complicity as theatre-maker of *Pocket Shots* suggested that this study would benefit from applying Flockemann's and Blumberg's theoretical framework to the plays selected for analysis. Chapter Four of this study, therefore, makes a similar comparison between the artists' complicity and the audiences' complicity in relation to the plays discussed. However, despite being published

less than five years ago, some of Blumberg's statements about how the productions discussed relate to current societal issues have become outdated by recent high-profile events involving the criminalised nature of South African society, and that have dramatically changed the way in which these issues are currently imagined and discussed. The fact that her article is engaged in the exercise of mapping all of the trends in articulating the unspeakable means that Blumberg makes limited reference to the interplay between each production and the societal issue it examines, and present-day society. This study is keenly interested in the articulations of the commonly unspeakable narratives of living in a society that is considered unsafe because of violent crimes as they are presented in contemporary South African theatre. Blumberg's model of analysing the productions considered in this article and her stance towards the artist's responsibility to 'speak for those who cannot' (Blumberg, 2009) have influenced this study's approach to South African theatre practitioners' interrogation of the various consequences of living in a criminalised society and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five.

1.2.6 Theatre, Crime, and the Edgy City in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg

Loren Kruger, in her 2001 article "Theatre, Crime, and the Edgy City in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg", discusses post-apartheid theatre's attempts to describe Johannesburg, both as a place and as a subject. Kruger focuses in on many of the same aspects of living in the post-apartheid criminalised society that this study wishes to discuss; however, her gaze is very narrowly engaged with Johannesburg throughout and thus does not suit the purposes of this study. However, there are many similarities that emerge between the conditions Kruger describes and those reported in other parts of South Africa. While they are presented as specific to Johannesburg, many of the aspects of living in a post-apartheid urban centre struggling with criminality that she discusses apply to other urban centres as well. She suggests that contrary to assertions by some that Johannesburg negates genre, the crime story could be the genre that best defines and describes the city as a subject. Kruger begins by outlining the city's history of criminality and segregation, also discussing the role that this segregation plays in the current state of seemingly undeterred criminality. She then briefly traces the development of South African theatre's attempts to discuss Johannesburg: what it has meant to people and how its very nature has caused or solved problems for people. Finally she draws all of these themes together with an analysis of Junction Avenue Theatre Company's play *Love, Crime and Johannesburg* (2000).

1.2.7 “It is Not Crime in the Way You See It” - Crime Discourses and Outlaw Culture in *Yizo Yizo*

Innocentia Jabulisile Mhlambi's article “‘It is Not Crime in the Way You See It’ Crime Discourses and Outlaw Culture in *Yizo Yizo*” (2010) discusses the television drama series *Yizo Yizo* (1999) in terms of the different configurations of analysing the crime wave in South Africa. The article is primarily concerned with highlighting the shortfalls of conventional modes of understanding the crime wave and criminality, specifically in terms of how these shortfalls affect efforts to put an end to the criminalised aspect of contemporary South African society. Mhlambi demonstrates a keen understanding of the existing canon of writing on the crime wave in South Africa (from local and international sources) and the various perspectives presented in this writing. She references the work of Anthony Altbeker as a major influence on her views on the crime wave, and works to support his assertions in her references to *Yizo Yizo*. *Yizo Yizo* aired on public access television (SABC channels) from 1999 to 2000 and was commissioned by the South African government to educate township youth about social issues, such as the dangers of gangsterism, unprotected sex and not completing secondary education. Mhlambi highlights how popular the series became because of its frank portrayal of life in the townships and the difficulties township youth face in contemporary South Africa. This article, whilst influencing the theoretical framework of this study, falls outside of its focus as it refers to a television show; it is acknowledged that the audience reception of a television show works differently to the audience reception of theatre and performance. However, with reference to the intertextual approach espoused by Anderson and Menon (2009) as discussed earlier, commonalities can be found between Mhlambi's research into representations of the criminalised society and the general scope of this study.

1.3 Hypothesis

As the preliminary literature review demonstrates, the crime wave in South Africa, like most processes in a transitioning society, is not simple to analyse, let alone offer solutions for. It encompasses issues of criminality, social justice, law enforcement, the justice system, victimisation and fear of victimisation. In the South African context it is invariably associated with the legacy of apartheid and the on-going efforts towards reconciliation and improved race relations. There are many varying points of view about what the crime wave is, whom it affects, what its causes are and what should be done about it (Bornman, van Eeden & Wentzel, 1998; Emmett & Butchart, 2000; Shaw, 2002; Mugler, 2005; Barolsky & Pillay, 2009; Silber & Geffen, 2009; Bruce & Gould, 2009; Burger, Gould & Newham, 2010; Berg & Shearing, 2011; Dixon, 2012; Collins, 2013). Added to the complex nature of this problem

are the indoctrinated prejudicial narratives of an apartheid past still lingering in the minds of some South Africans, which affect their perspectives on law, justice and social order in the New South Africa. While it is widely acknowledged that there is a very high number of instances of crime in South Africa today, and that it is seemingly beyond the capabilities of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to reduce them to the point where citizens no longer fear criminality on a large scale, the crime wave affects different groups of South Africans differently (Silber & Geffen, 2009). The theatrical handling of this subject matter therefore requires a complex, multi-layered and sophisticated approach (Anderson & Menon, 2009). Contemporary South African theatre is privileged to have the freedom and the opportunity to redefine what it means to be a South African and what it means to live in South Africa today. Marcia Blumberg (2009) strongly champions the view that we now use this opportunity to see a multiplicity of previously subverted voices expressing their stories and experiences of contemporary South African life, as well as exposing ourselves to the views and opinions of other South Africans in an attempt to grow our understanding of one another.

Living in a criminalised society is an unpleasant reality, but the crime wave remains an inevitable part of everyday life for many South Africans, as well as being a narrative that most South Africans participate in. My hypothesis is that by undertaking immersive research in response to my phenomenological experience as an audience member observing the affect that staging the criminalised society can have on people, my own work as a theatre-maker has become a more empathic/sensitive/integrated reflection of living in the criminalised society; and that the process of immersive research as it is demonstrated in this study can stand as an example for other theatre-makers to reflect more fully on their own to the ongoing dialogue on the criminalised society and the development of South African theatre's response to it.

1.4 Problem statement

In alignment with the view offered by Butchart et al. (2000: 29–30), it is my personal experience that South African citizens do not critically interrogate the high crime rate and thus often misunderstand why it remains as high as it does (Butchart *et al.*, 2000: 29–30). As the mouthpieces of ordinary citizens, artists have a responsibility to enhance their understanding of such social dynamics/events, as well as to interrogate their own choices and the effect these may have on audience members. The violence of direct victimisation has proven to be the most popular dramatization of the theme under discussion, particularly in the medium of theatre and film, perhaps because they facilitate most directly both the visual and the embodied nature of these events. But, representing violence in this way can

sometimes be sensationalised or over-simplified, particularly in the case of violent personal crime. In a transitioning society as well acquainted with violence as South Africa, displays of violent crime on the stage or screen can therefore elicit an extreme reaction (in the case of viewers like the student watching *6 Mins* and the woman watching *Pocket Shots*) or a more muted response (as is often the case with viewers who have become desensitised to witnessing violent acts) based on the depiction of the violence and the audience members' individual interpretations of those depictions. As the examples of the student watching *6 Mins* and the woman and her family members watching *Pocket Shots* demonstrate, staged violence for South African audiences has the potential to seem a poor imitation (or an imitation in 'bad taste') of a lived experience of the violent crime that many individuals have suffered directly or indirectly.

It is Nevitt's (2013) assertion that the way in which theatre-makers depict and discuss violence is intrinsically reflective of their personal opinions about violence, and the particular form of violence being staged and that the view they present should criticise or at least question the existing attitudes and responses to the high crime rates. Theatre-makers should also consider the fact that in a country that is as criminalised as ours, there is a high statistical probability that members of their cast or audience may have been victims of violent crime at some point in their lives.

1.5 Research questions

What are the responses that individuals may have to their experiences of living in the criminalised society? What are the various experiences individuals have of living in the criminalised society? How have contemporary theatre-makers in South Africa approached staging violent crime, and/or represented living in the criminalised society? How have the theatrical representations of violent crime and/or living in the criminalised society affected audiences and contributed to/supported their perceptions of violent crime in South Africa?

1.6 Research aims

- 1) The identification and categorisation of selected contemporary South African plays dealing with social insecurity caused by the fear of violent personal crime and other recognised experiences of living in the criminalised society.
- 2) The development of alternative frameworks for analysing contemporary South African theatre that minimise the binaries and conventions of existing apartheid and post-apartheid theatre studies.

- 3) Critically discussing the reception of these plays by a diversity of individuals (audience members, practitioners, and critics) to determine whether, why, and to what extent the themes/content were affective.

The ultimate aim of this study, then, is to demonstrate a process undertaken by a theatre-maker attempting to understand the nature of the criminalised society and how it affects people in order to create theatre that is more cognisant of how depictions of violent crime and its effects can affect audience members and the discourse on the criminalised society in general. The process and findings of this research could be used by other theatre-makers to inform their approach to staging productions reflecting the criminalised society in the future; however, it is not the intention of this study to prescribe any methodologies, intentions or outcomes to theatre-makers and theatre scholars.

1.7 Research design and methods

1.7.1 Investigating the crime wave

The starting point of my research is the pursuit of an understanding of the feelings and attitudes of South Africans towards the crime wave in the country, and what their expectations of their quality of life and freedom are, based on the influence of the crime wave in their immediate lives. While crime, particularly violent personal crime, is a very serious problem facing South Africans, the fear and insecurity *about violent crime* is equally problematic. People will make decisions on where to live, where and when to socialise, where to work, how to commute, even whether or not to remain in South Africa based on their level of security/insecurity. My research simultaneously pursued an interdisciplinary literature review and the informal collection of data from media reports, conversations and social media trends. The informal data collection process was an intuitive artistic response to the problem I had encountered, and the fragments of information gathered were not recorded in a systematic or logical manner, such as might be the case with a case study or interviews. But, these impressions did influence my interpretation of the more analytical and statistical information I gathered from books and articles on criminology, politics, history, psychology and sociology relating to the crime wave. Nevitt, in her concluding comments in *Theatre & Violence* (2013), offers a viewpoint/observation that supports this approach:

To think about and to analyse violence is not a neutral or an emotionally disengaged process. In my experience, and in the examples I have used here, writers and performance-makers do not engage in the study and depiction of violence because they *like* or *admire* violence, but because they profoundly dislike it and seek to contribute to the making of a more peaceful and less violent world (2013: 75).

It is essential that this study aims to be as representative of the broad range of experiences of living in this criminalised society as is possible. There is a large body of data and existing research on crime in various areas in South Africa, dating from the apartheid era until today. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) - which is responsible for the annual crime statistics that the government releases to the public - constantly collects data from various sources including the police, community police forums, and the general public, and collates it in one central location in Pretoria. It is probably the best resource on the development and nature of the crime wave in South Africa, followed by journal articles in the field of criminology and newspaper articles. The research in this field is largely quantitative: criminologists are primarily concerned with measuring the crime problem in order to understand how it proliferates. This research is presented as statistics and graphs that reflect a period of several years, as well as comparisons between them. This study is largely concerned with how theatre-makers navigate the range of individual experiences within the criminalised society, particularly how individuals feel about their experiences, as the crime wave in South Africa refers simultaneously to actual instances of criminality, to the various perceptions of potential victimisation, and to the behaviour modifications associated with these perceptions. Feelings about individual experiences - and individual experiences themselves - are difficult to ascertain and to represent by using quantitative methodologies, as is evidenced by the challenges faced by researchers described in the National Victims of Crime Surveys (Burton, Du Plessis, Leggett, Louw, Mistry *et al.*, 2004).

As Hans Visser, vice-chairperson of the Security Officers Board, has stated: "The rate of crime is influenced by the public's perception of crime" (Gollan, 2001). The reactions people have to crime or perceived safety from crime can range from insecurity, to fear, to frustration, to anger, to resigned acceptance of the status quo or hopeful determination to persevere despite the potential threat (Burton *et al.*, 2004).

A central challenge (and motivation) for this study is to find effective systems for interpreting and (re)presenting this quantitative data within a qualitative-phenomenological study. This is an important means of informing how theatre-makers reflect the experiences of people living in the criminalised society and how their handling of this subject matter affects the people they are working with, namely performers and audience members.

1.7.2 Selecting and mapping the plays

The eleven plays selected for discussion in this study have each, in their own way, carved out a definitive perspective on one or more aspects of living in a criminalised society. My intention at the outset of my research was to present a discussion of a selection of plays that reflected the collective experience of living in a criminalised society in its totality. However, the practical limitations of gaining access to such a vast amount of material constrained these efforts. In terms of viewing performances (in other words, stagings of such plays), I was limited by what was being presented locally and by how well these performances were advertised beforehand. Some of the plays selected for discussion had been staged in the past and were available for analysis in script form only.

In his thesis, Anton Krueger (2008) makes a clear statement that his study resides in theatre as literature, that is, on an analysis and commentary of the play in script form. My informal experience has shown that the debate being engaged between academic departments in literature, and theatre and performance, world-wide as to whether or not plays should be analysed primarily as works of literature or as works of performance is an ongoing one.

As an emerging theatre-maker,¹¹ I interpret much of the stimulus I encounter - including literary sources - in theatrical terms. When analysing a performance, I look at it simultaneously from the perspectives of performer, director, writer and designer. My training in media theory has also made me aware of analysing performances according to my own societal experience and understanding. I find that when I am analysing a play script, the same process happens: I envisage a live performance that I consider would be possible to stage using the text in front of me as inspiration and I do this simultaneously from the perspectives of performer, director and designer. Perhaps this stems from my experience as an undergraduate performance student at City Varsity,¹² where I was taught to use scripts firstly as tools for interpretation into performances (as a visual medium) and only later in my education to analyse scripts as literary texts.

Several productions will be discussed in this study: some of these I have viewed myself without having read the scripts; some of these I have both viewed the performance and read the scripts; and for the rest I have only read the scripts. It is my experience that the plays that I have had the opportunity to both read and watch have provided the most complete understanding and thus make for the most thorough analysis. However, I feel confident in my experience and training to be able to analyse to some extent, and comment on, plays

¹¹ The use of the term 'theatre-maker' in this study is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three in section 3.2.1.

¹² City Varsity is a tertiary institution in Cape Town and Johannesburg that specialises in training students for work in the film industry. I studied in the faculty of film as an acting student and completed courses in film production, film studies, theatre studies and performance.

that I have merely read. As such, I will discuss all of the productions in similar ways, varying only in the detail to which I am confident to analyse the play. I will, however, indicate the extent of my engagement with the play, for the sake of transparency. I am of the opinion that a script is a text designed to facilitate a performance event, and I do not subscribe to Krueger's method of analysing scripts as purely literary texts. Performance elements, such as cast, lighting, design and direction should not be excluded from the analysis of a South African play. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, most contemporary theatre-makers in South Africa are involved in more than one aspect of authorship at the same time; in the case of many young theatre-makers, they can even be said to be auteurs.¹³ If the theatre-makers themselves consider playwriting and directing, choreography, design as part of their process of authorship, then as analysts of their work we should also consider both their writing and staging.

Furthermore, this study is specifically focused on English plays being staged at arts festivals and theatre complexes (with the inclusion of English plays that include some Afrikaans) as I am a first-language English speaker. I have not included Afrikaans plays in this study, based on my personal understanding and as supported by observations by Van Heerden (2008) and Hauptfleisch (1997) that theatre written in Afrikaans for Afrikaans audiences has a very distinctive character and purpose. This distinction is borne out of a theatre tradition that was allowed to develop rapidly and intensely as a result of generous state funding during apartheid (Hauptfleisch, 1997: 8–9). This distinctive nature was further perpetuated when, as Van Heerden (2008) introduces, the post-apartheid government showed a lack of interest in continuing the apartheid-era's support of the Afrikaans language above the other eleven official languages of South Africa: "The new government expressed a preference for English as *the lingua franca* for the country as a whole. Speakers of Afrikaans, more specifically white Afrikaners, perceived their language to be under threat and with it their cultural heritage, and this resulted in the development of the Afrikaans arts festivals and a platform for new Afrikaans drama" (2008: 220). This distinctive identity typically stands out when watching an Afrikaans-language production, which specifically locates these theatre pieces within a specific tradition and cultural group identity.¹⁴ As a result, these plays cannot be described as being reflective of experiences of living in a criminalised society that intersect different cultural groups and, as has been stated, the intention at the outset of this study was

¹³ In film studies, the term *auteur* is used to refer to a film maker who has a distinctive signature to their work and always aligns the elements of their films (acting, set, lighting, costuming, cinematography etc.) to reflect this vision of what film should look like. It is my understanding, as a former film student, that this term can be used in a cross-disciplinary way to refer to theatre-makers who have similarly demonstrated a recognisable preference for certain techniques and aesthetics.

¹⁴ There is a perceivable difference between the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner culture. Not all Afrikaans language speakers identify as members of the Afrikaner cultural group and not all individuals who identify as being Afrikaners speak Afrikaans. The statements of Hauptfleisch and Van Heerden refer specifically to theatre by, and for, the Afrikaner cultural group which are mostly Afrikaans language plays.

to provide an overview of the various experiences of living in the criminalised society in South Africa without using the cultural divisions inherited from apartheid as categories for analysing original works of contemporary South African theatre.¹⁵ This is discussed further in section 3.2.5, but because of the multilingual nature of South African society communication is mostly in English and is mostly kept rudimentary in order for people with different home languages to understand without the need for translation. This study has therefore focused on plays that are predominantly in English, but includes plays that use one or more of the other ten official languages, as this is reflective of how large-scale communication usually functions in South African society. It was also deemed necessary to exclude what I consider to be ‘community theatre’¹⁶ because of logistical difficulties in accessing these productions. Firstly, these productions are typically only advertised within the areas that they are due to be performed in, making it difficult for someone living outside of those areas to know when and where to see a show. Secondly, these plays are seldom developed and published in script form, which is another way that productions could gain exposure. Finally, the plays are typically written and performed in indigenous languages such as isiXhosa and isiZulu making them difficult to follow for audiences who are not well versed in these languages. A thorough study of these community theatre productions and the theatre-makers that create them therefore requires travel and translation services that this study simply did not allow for. This is therefore also an area for potential further investigation in the future.

While this is definitely a study of works of theatre and trends they reveal, it cannot exist without a component of literary study (as plays are both literary *and* performative); nor can it exist without a component of social study (as plays emerge from the societal issues concerning their creators and affecting their viewers).

Several plays excluded from this study such as *Love and Crime in Johannesburg* (2000) by the Junction Avenue Theatre Company are what could be defined as ‘straight crime plays’, plays which are strictly about a specific criminal enterprise. The genre or themes cannot be said to match the experience of living in a criminalised society as such, as the action typically revolves around the planning and execution of a criminal act by criminals and are often based on, or make reference to, well-known American crime/gangster films. These

¹⁵ The second research aim of this study is “the development of alternative frameworks for analysing contemporary South African theatre that minimise the binaries and conventions of existing apartheid and post-apartheid theatre studies” (page 17) and while it is difficult to avoid using these conventional categories in a transitioning society, it is the intention of this study to highlight the cross-cultural nature of living in a criminalised society by focusing on alternative conceptual frameworks for describing South African society that reflect this aspect.

¹⁶ I have chosen to use the term ‘community theatre’ to describe a specific form of theatre being produced in South Africa and explain my understanding of this term in more detail in Chapter Three. The term is currently being appropriated to refer to amateur dramatic societies, but was used to refer to ‘township theatre’ until about ten years ago.

plays seldom explore the emotional and psychological effects that this criminal act has on its victims or its perpetrators.

It is important for the purposes of this study to sort the plays into those that relate to a specific crime, and those that relate to living in a society seemingly overrun by crime or to coming to terms with the after-effects of a criminal act, and to understand how these two categories might relate differently to the relevance of this study.

1.7.3 Categorising the eleven selected plays

Theatre can be understood to be a mainstream art form and as such has the ability to influence public perceptions, while itself being influenced by public perceptions. It is therefore important to the research aims of this study to investigate how large and diverse the audience is that plays - particularly those dealing with a serious social issue such as living in a criminalised society - have reached and how this has influenced the efficacy of the message/s that they were intended to convey.

There are limitations to how information relating to the South African theatre industry is distributed, particularly in terms of the role of theatre critics and the reviews which they write.¹⁷ These limits result in difficulties obtaining professional reviews of every production that is staged, as well as difficulties in obtaining copies of those professional reviews that were previously published in newspapers. A study such as this, therefore, relies on reviews available on the internet and various informal means of obtaining information about productions staged in South Africa, or South African productions staged in other countries. For the purposes of this study, an impression of the public response to a production (whether or not it was favourably received) was firstly obtained by the available search results produced by an internet search of the production in question, as well as whether or not the play script was published. How much the internet has to say about a production is not the most accurate method of determining how favourably it was received, but it did provide an effective indication of how far the production managed to tour¹⁸ and how many critically engaged people managed to see it. Secondly, an analysis of the type of articles discovered and the credentials of the authors of those articles, as well as the language used to describe the production, were taken as measures of a positive critical reception. For example, productions that are referenced in sociological articles suggest that a secondary audience is engaging with the production beyond the initial audience that consumes the play as a live performance.

¹⁷ This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

¹⁸ Exposure to various audiences often suggests commercial success, as a production's ability to tour is determined by access to funds that cover the expenses of such mobility, which indicates that it is a fruitful financial venture.

There have been productions, like *Tshepang* and to an extent *Relativity: Township Stories*, that have left long-lasting impressions on audiences and critics locally and abroad (Fisher, 2004; Marlowe, 2004; Peter, 2004; Anon., 2009, 2011; Meng, 2009; Kort, 2011). *Tshepang*, however, should be more precisely defined as being about a certain isolated community and the specific criminal event that devastated it, rather than revealing the attitudes and actions of the South African public towards the general state of criminal activity in the country. However, *Tshepang* along with *Relativity: Township Stories*, are good examples of a commercially and critically successful formula of theatre-making and can therefore be used to draw certain inferences about which theatrical elements and techniques best serve the favourable reception of plays about living in the criminalised society.

1.7.4 Identifying themes in the selected plays

Substantial effort is expended on research that aims to define the causes of crime. In a society where victimisation is as significant as in ours, individual responses to crime are subjective, emotional and fuelled by regular discussion and stories (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 105).

At the outset of this study, I had certain assumptions about life in the criminalised society based on my own experience as a citizen living in South Africa. Some of these assumptions were supported by news reports on television and in the newspaper as well as in casual conversations with people. As I immersed myself in the research of criminologists and sociologists studying the crime wave in South Africa, certain familiar aspects emerged about the way in which individuals' experiences are affected by the crime wave. The themes that I use to group the selected crime plays are based on the range of emotional/psychological responses that people typically have to living with the constant threat of becoming victims of criminality, as suggested by victimology articles in *The Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Violence* (Renzetti & Edleson, 2008), *The National Victims of Crime Survey South Africa 2003* (Burton *et al.*, 2004) and various other articles and books read over the course of the study. "Crime is experienced subjectively and often very emotionally. It is known that crime makes people and whole communities feel powerless and out of control" (Friedman (1998) in Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 112). It therefore became important to focus on the individual's subjective and emotional response to being a victim (or a bystander) in a criminalised society.

Smit and Cilliers (1998) further describe the theories in criminology which suggest that perpetrators of violence are typically motivated by their environment and/ or subjective, psychological influences.

Violence is the result of cultural conditioning. This perspective is based on the premise that violence is acquired behaviour. The assumption is that violence is part of a culture and that members or groups belonging to the culture adhere to that culture's values and customs. Violence is therefore not simply the outcome of individual idiosyncrasy, but is a product of the environment (Smit & Cilliers, 1998: 204).

The theory that psychological factors lead to violence is described as being based on the idea that a perpetrator's genetic and psychological character predetermine their propensity to commit violence. The authors provide examples of these psychological factors: "deprivation, frustration, relative deprivation and relative depravation perceived as injustice" (1998: 205). It is known that some perpetrators of violent crime were at one point victims of crime themselves (Butchart & Emmett, 2000: 12). As such, these categories of subjective responses could be used to understand all parties experiencing the criminalised society - victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

Anderson and Menon present complex and multiple categorisations of instances of violence in order to understand these societal problems within their context with a view to understand these problems as they actually exist. Over-simplification has been shown to render efforts to address instances of violence ineffective.

[W]e argue that conventional distinctions between 'victim' and 'aggressor' are often ill-suited to fully explain the effects of violence. This is not to deny that in discrete scenarios certain parties take on an active role in the perpetuation of violence; nor is it to ignore the destructive, often deadly intentions behind such actions. Rather, we mean to situate violence within a network of conflict whose complexities are forgotten in the binary language of domination and resistance. Conceiving of violence purely in terms of cause and effect – and organizing against violence around the theme of victimization – dumbs down the intricate problem of violence's productivity in the contemporary political sphere (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 5).

Bornman, Minnaar and Roos (1998) offer a list of factors that should be analysed in order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the crime wave, how it operates, whom it affects and how it affects them. This appeared to be an appropriate guide to use in analysing the quantitative fields of criminology and sociology in order to draw out trends that could be used for a phenomenological study. The writers observe that the factors that must be analysed include:

- social and political dynamics
- physical and emotional well-being
- the undermining of family life and value systems by urbanization and westernization
- the role of culture
- the drug-violence nexus
- the influence of the media
- the influence of collective and political violence on the individual and the family
- places and situations where violence occurs
- needs and aspirations of individuals and groups (Bornman, Minnaar, *et al.*, 1998: 438–439).

There are multiple factors that influence the crime wave as well as the experiences of those living with it. These external factors influence internal (emotional and psychological) experiences and these experiences are the focus of this study. The individual response themes identified for this study are therefore inferred from a combination of the following: personal experience, popular sentiment reflected in media and social media, existing victimology research, existing criminological studies of the South African crime wave, and existing sociological research into South African society after 1994. Some of the identified responses were found to be primary emotions and some are secondary. The most important themes selected for this study are fear (with reactions ranging from paranoia to migration) and its secondary emotion: insecurity (with potential reactions ranging from helplessness to an obsession with security measures). Themes of hope and acceptance, as well as frustration and its secondary emotion – anger – will be explored further in Chapter Four where all of these themes are discussed in greater detail and applied to the plays selected. These themes are essential in forming an accurate overall impression of the varying experiences of living in South Africa in the current climate of social insecurity; however, fear and insecurity manifest behaviours and attitudes that appear to be unique to the South African context and are thus more interesting to investigate and discuss. Yael Farber provides an endorsement for this with her comment:

Put very simply, I profoundly believe that speaking is a form of healing. Until you've told your story – even if you intellectually understand you've been wronged – the memories may remain a source of secrecy, pain or shame. Speaking and being heard is a modest but profound beginning. The shattered history of South Africa will take generations to heal, but I believe theatre has a significant role in this process (in Nevitt, 2013: 70).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a performance event had a profound influence on individuals involved and the audience that viewed it, either live or on their television screens. As a result, it forms an important part of contemporary South African history and the post-apartheid performance culture. Many theatre-makers and academics have been influenced by it and the effects that it had on its participants and audience. From a theatre study perspective, the testimonies and responses presented by the victims and bystanders of the violence of apartheid were far more interesting and compelling than those of the perpetrators. As a result, I am influenced to favour the perspective of the victim over the perspective of the perpetrator in this study as well.

1.8 Chapter outline

Chapter Two explores and discusses the various perspectives that form the overall societal assumption referred to as the 'crime wave' in South Africa. The chapter offers insights attained from other fields of research which elucidate the nature of the 'crime wave' and how it relates to South Africa as a transitioning society. Comparisons are drawn between what the criminalised society can be understood as, quantitatively and how people perceive it qualitatively. The chapter also discusses various external influences that cause certain perspectives and the subsequent social behaviour modifications associated with these perspectives. As an introduction to the conceptual framework used to discuss the eleven plays selected for this study, Chapter Two also discusses how internal influences can contribute to certain social behaviour modifications. Chapter Two also contextualises the discourse about crime and violence within the global discourse around violence and how individuals experience it.

Chapter Three is an outline of various noteworthy aspects of the South African theatre industry. There are many perspectives on the South African theatre industry and how it functions; and this chapter explores how I personally understand the South African theatre scene in relation to analysing its representation of a criminalised society. As has been discussed, categorisation is essential to understanding the phenomenon under discussion. It intersects several fields that employ various methodologies that focus on various aspects of the crime wave. It was therefore essential to identify elements that I felt were most pertinent

to understanding the findings of this study, and how I chose to draw the data and knowledge under discussion together.

Chapter Four introduces and discusses the eleven plays selected for this study in relation to the themes identified. The chapter begins by introducing each play with a description of its creation and staging, how I was exposed to the play, and my initial impressions of the stories presented. It also highlights any awards each production may have won and any controversies associated with the productions that were uncovered in my research. Thereafter, each play is discussed in terms of the potential behavioural responses individuals can have to a criminalised society identified and discussed in Chapter Two. Particular attention is paid to how the characters in the plays modify their behaviours in response to their experiences, how their experiences affect their emotions and how they relate to one another. Chapter Four finally discusses audience impressions of the productions based on my own experience as an audience member and on reviews obtained on the internet.

Chapter Five presents the findings of this research project, and introduces some of the challenges that I experienced over the course of my research. The chapter also introduces recommendations for further potential interdisciplinary research into the staging of the criminalised society in South Africa based on my findings and my experience of conducting this research.

Chapter Two

2.1 What is the crime wave?

The South African crime wave is atypical of what is commonly accepted to be a 'crime wave' as it does not follow the usual pattern of describing a steady rise in all levels of criminality over a period of time (the in-depth figures used to produce the official crime statistics can be found at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/Publications>). It is important to understand, however, that the South African crime wave, as it is referred to by all sectors of society, is an abstract concept that refers to the perceived cause of feelings of insecurity and fear relating to potential victimisation, particularly as a consequence of some form of violence. Once it is accepted that the crime wave in the South African context is a 'catch-all' term used to refer to a variety of problems requiring a broad range of solutions then it becomes easier to understand what this phenomenon is, how it came about, how it affects people and whose responsibility it is to alleviate this problem. This study requires that the crime wave be understood from all angles as a means of categorising how it has been staged in South Africa and where the shortfalls lie in its representation. This will assist future efforts to define, explore and discuss the crime wave in South Africa through the medium of theatre.

A 'crime wave' is understood in the international context as being a gradual increase in the recorded levels of criminality in a particular area or community over a period of time, although it can sometimes be used to refer to a gradual increase in reported cases of a specific form of crime in a particular area or community. In the South African context, however, it is generally understood to be the specific and phenomenal increase in violent crime since the end of apartheid. In this context, the term 'crime wave' takes on several connotations and meanings specific to South Africa that are often not shared with how the term is used in other countries. Firstly, the South African 'crime wave' does not refer to the typical gradual increase seen in other instances of 'crime waves', but rather to a sharp spike in reported violent crimes that is related both to an actual increase in violence and criminality, as well as to the implementation of changes to the police and government systems of reporting and recording crime. This sharp spike, identified as occurring both during the transition to democracy in the early 1990s and in the 2002/2003 financial year, was then followed by a gradual increase or decrease - depending on the type of crime - in reported cases over the next ten years.

During the apartheid era, the eleven national police forces (including the South African Police (SAP), the TBVC¹⁹ state police forces and Bantustan or 'Self-Governing Territories' police departments) operated independently, using differing techniques and policies of police work. In 1994, these police departments suddenly became a centralised agency with centralised policies of reporting and recording criminal activities.²⁰ Some provinces which had never recorded certain forms of crime before 1994 were suddenly required to provide figures for the number of cases under their jurisdiction. This contributed (in conjunction with several other factors which will be discussed in section 2.2.5) to the sudden increase in reported violent crime.

The South African crime wave also differs from other crime waves in that even after the sudden increase of crimes reported after 1994, the crime rates did not gradually increase as would be expected.²¹ Rather, the levels of reported violent crime fluctuated (in varying ways depending on the type of crime) over the next two decades in a seemingly erratic fashion. As will be discussed further in section 2.2.3, the processes of collecting and recording data for the purpose of presenting crime statistics in South Africa is flawed, and has been throughout its history. Public perceptions of the crime wave, according to criminologists, are largely based on the crime statistics that have been released publicly by the South African National Police Commissioners every year (Burger *et al.*, 2010: 10), and these statistics can be shown to be largely unreliable (Leggett, Louw, Schonteich & Sekhonyane, 2003: 26–29).

The South African crime wave can therefore be understood as a general perception of criminality being considered 'out of control' that has been dubbed a 'crime wave' by the media, general public, and politicians as a means of easily referring to a myriad of issues relating to violent crime and the fear or insecurity that it evokes.

The key points to understand for the purposes of this study are: firstly, that this specific South African phenomenon referred to as the crime wave is an abstract concept; secondly, that this abstract concept refers to a simultaneous perception of a rise in instances of violent crime, a lowering of police efficacy in crime prevention, and a leniency with regards to prosecuting and punishing violent offenders; thirdly, this perceived phenomenon or abstract concept is nevertheless legitimately rooted in high levels of violent crime in contemporary post-apartheid South African society; and lastly, that these high levels of violent crime are

¹⁹ The TBVC States were Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, and the Self-Governing Territories were Gazankulu, Kangwane, Kwandebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa and QwaQwa (Andrade, 1985; Weber, 2014).

²⁰ An overview of the history of the SAPS can be found on their website <http://www.saps.gov.za/about/history.php> (Date accessed 7 October 2014).

²¹ "A longitudinal analysis of total national crime recorded annually shows that overall crime levels peaked in 2002/3, after which there was a gradual decline until 2007/8 when crime started to rise once again" (Burger *et al.*, 2010: 3).

inextricably linked to the societal legacies of the apartheid system of structural segregation based on racial classification.

2.2 Who does the crime wave affect and how?

In order to understand how the criminalised society is represented, one first needs to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the criminalised society occurs, and is perceived, within the South African context. Several exceptional factors about the nature of the crime wave in this country need to be taken into consideration when analysing the theatrical response to, and representation of, the South African criminalised society. Like many other phenomena in post-apartheid South Africa, there is no single or unified experience of the criminalised society; different individuals in different population groups experience living within the criminalised society differently. Referring back to the work of theatre scholars Blumberg (2009) and Flockemann (2011) discussed in Chapter One, it is the assertion of this study that theatre-makers and those who analyse their work in contemporary South Africa have a responsibility to promote under-represented narratives which may reflect the experiences of those who have been historically excluded from the discourse around prevalent societal issues such as the crime wave.

This section will outline the various methods of classifying people that have been observed within the inter-disciplinary discourse about the crime wave in South Africa, in order to understand the roles that individuals can occupy and how they typically respond within these roles to the criminalised nature of society. This study is primarily concerned with analysing how the crime wave is represented from a theatre studies perspective; theatre as a medium favours the staging of the individual's experience of and reactions to a phenomenon, as these are often the most engaging for audiences. It has been discussed in Chapter One that the South African crime wave is an abstract concept that exists as a result of a combination of factors such as: personal (first-hand) experiences, popular sentiments reflected in media and social media, and the government's representation of criminality through official statistics and statements about these. There are also different identifiable ways that individuals can experience and respond to living in the South African criminalised society that are also influenced by the abovementioned factors.

Criminal violence can affect people in different ways depending on their level of exposure to the criminal act. Direct exposure involves victims and perpetrators; indirect exposure involves police officers, healthcare professionals, and/or their associates. The emotional responses that individuals can have will vary, but it is important to note that these responses are affected by the level of direct physical contact experienced and the nature of physical

violence or threat of violence used. In order to understand the nature of the human dynamics involved in criminal acts and how the people involved could be emotionally affected by their experience I set out to immerse myself in victimology research. As has been discussed in Chapter One, this research is primarily conducted by criminologists, psychologists and sociologists in a quantitative manner. As such, the methods and terminology used are designed to accurately reflect statistical information and instrumental explanations for certain characteristics of the criminalised society. This next section therefore outlines how the crime wave in South Africa affects people with *direct exposure* to criminal acts according to the perspective of victimology.

Victimology is the study of victims of crime, including their characteristics and their relationships with offenders and the criminal justice system. Traditionally, victimology is considered to be a subarea within criminology. Victimology, which involves the study of crime victims, is different from criminology, which involves the study of crime and criminal behaviour (Muftić, 2008: 737).

As Muftić suggests, victimology spans both psychology and sociology more than it relates to criminology and is thus a field of enquiry that is of interest to scholars of all three disciplines. The interdisciplinary nature of this research provides readers with a thorough and holistic overview of the effects of crime on victims. It also provides insights into the responses and motivations of perpetrators, as epidemiological and criminological studies suggest that many perpetrators (particularly of violent interpersonal crime) have been victimised themselves (Butchart & Emmett, 2000: 17; Shaw, 2002: 60–62). Victimology research is an incredibly insightful resource; however, it is not conducted with theatre-makers or artists in mind, and therefore falls just short of providing a complete understanding necessary to effectively use it in theatre studies to discuss or represent fear of crime or insecurity related to living in a criminalised society.

A further context to be considered relevant for this research is epidemiology: “Epidemiology is the quantitative study of the distribution or frequency of, and the determinants or factors associated with, a particular issue affecting the public. These issues of interest range from diseases, to accidents, to behaviours such as violence” (Rennison, 2008: 218). Epidemiology can thus be considered the study of social issues that are deemed to be prevalent enough to warrant ‘epidemic’ status. Epidemiological studies track the instances of the specific issue (in terms of this study, crime and violence) and the effect it has on society,

analysing these to recommend possible cures or solutions for the problem.²² In a sense, many of the studies published as criminology - particularly those discussing crime statistics - can be considered forms of epidemiology. Currently, criminologists are working with medical practitioners (particularly hospitals and mortuaries) and sociologists with increasing frequency to improve the accuracy of the crime statistics in the hopes of gathering more detailed data to provide government and the police with more specific advice on combatting crime.

2.2.1 The influence of crime statistics on perceptions of the crime wave in South Africa

The actual height of the crime wave, according to available data, was in 2003, after which the upward trend in reported crimes either slowed or stopped entirely (the data vary according to the type of crime). There was also a perceived spike in 2010, the year that South Africa hosted the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup, but most criminology experts believe that this was due to increased opportunity for criminals and increased police capacity during the competition (Burger *et al.*, 2010: 10). Crime rates went back down to the 2009 levels in 2011, further suggesting that this was more of an anomaly than an indication of a real change in the trends. However, due to the limitations of the processes of data acquisition about crime in South Africa and the way these data are set out, the much debated crime statistics are not reliable indicators of the actual proliferation of crime.

It is now accepted practice in South Africa to argue that official crime statistics – that is, those collected and released by the South African Police Service – provide a poor indication of levels of crime in the country. This is because official statistics never seem to match the personal experiences of citizens (and their friends and neighbours) and because crime statistics are often unsurprisingly interpreted to serve political purposes (Shaw, 2002: 43).

It has been shown by David Bruce (2010a) that there are several problems with the police procedures of collecting and presenting data that are used to compile crime statistics. Some of these problems have to do with the relationship between the police and the public, which is not as it should be, and will not be solved without structural changes and training in the

²² It is important to note that while not all epidemiologists are from the medical field, it is common practice to make use of medical terminology. The field originated as a medical research undertaking and has since expanded to include non-medical problems that are epidemic in nature. In my research it was found that outside of criminology, epidemiological research was mostly referenced by those in the public health sector. As such, when discussing the findings made in my immersive research, I choose to appropriate the medical terminology used by researchers in this field.

SAPS. Public trust in the police is dependent on the crime statistics released each year. Citizens need to see a marked reduction in violent crime rates in order to feel safe. However, the increases and decreases in the crime rates have also been shown to be unrelated to an actual increase or decrease in occurrences of crime. Relying solely on the crime statistics to inform public opinion and government policy has also been shown to be ineffective, as those categories of crime (related to murder and property) that make use of more than one source of data are consistently the most accurately quantified. This is the real value of accurate crime statistics: enabling citizens to make informed decisions and take calculated action in response to crime in their localised areas, and South Africa as a whole. Burger et al. state that “inaccurate statistics pose a problem for crime analysts and the police themselves, who need accurate information upon which to base their crime reduction strategies” (2010: 10).

2.2.2 The influence of the media on perceptions of the crime wave

The South African ‘crime wave’ can be understood as an abstract concept that arises out of discussions taking place in various contexts, including that of popular culture. Since popular culture is the point of convergence of mass media, social media and social interactions, public perceptions about the crime wave are therefore inextricably influenced by the mass media’s framing of crime and criminal acts in South Africa.

The media combine with one-on-one rumour and anecdote to fuel fears and anger about crime and violence. Discussion about crime is as common an occurrence as is crime itself. However uninformed or unscientific such a discussion may be, it often has serious consequences, both in terms of fear and formal or informal response (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 106).

The way that South Africans engage with the media presentations and representations of violence certainly have an influence on their perceptions of the crime wave and their potential victimisation, which in turn affects their feelings of insecurity and fear of crime, which in turn affects their behaviour. Anderson and Menon, whose book *Violence Performed* (2009) is mentioned in Chapter One, are very clear when they state that the ways in which the media represent violence are not innocent and should be critically analysed by those involved in performance studies.²³

²³ In section 1.2.2, Anderson and Menon suggest that ‘performance studies’ is the more appropriate term to use when investigating how violence is staged than ‘theatre studies’, as theatre studies implies that a theatre space and the conventions of the theatre have been used to represent violence performatively, whereas performative interactions with violence also exist outside of the theatrical space, such as the various spectatorial interactions with the airplanes hitting the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001. They furthermore discuss the hegemonic ways in which individuals imagine and interpret the concepts associated with violence and how they ‘perform’ certain recognisable responses (in terms of behaviour modifications) to their understanding of the violence that they are interacting with, both directly and

[W]e argue that representations of violence are not innocently mimetic, and risk extending and perpetuating the very trauma they aim to expose. This suggests, of course, that representations of violence are both subjective and performative: not merely involved in staging and framing specific acts of violence, but also of producing the context in which violence is rationalized and excused as a symptom of inter-cultural encounter (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 6).

This can be taken to refer both to how the media frame the problem of criminal violence in society, but also to how theatre-makers subsequently choose to represent the problem of criminal violence in society; which is the focus of this study.

Most members of the public rely on the media to translate pertinent information about their risk of potential victimisation. The mass media have played this role since before the transition to democracy in the early 1990s: the production of South African television and radio took place mostly in global isolation, together with many other phenomena of South African society, as a result of the embargoes placed by the international community in opposition to the South African government's segregationist policy; in alignment with the state funding these broadcasting corporations received, it was mostly stories and news that were favourable to the apartheid government's point of view that were broadcast (Butchart *et al.*, 2000: 39–40). Media houses and broadcasting corporations that functioned during the apartheid era proposed a narrow focus on lifestyles and interests that the government wanted to project onto the white minority and black majority, in many cases intentionally excluding reports that opposed the hegemony and exposed the harsh lived reality of the non-white majority. Sociologist Allen Feldman (2002), described these efforts as “structural forgetfulness” and “the fragmentation of public recollection”, and proposed they were the result of a combination of “secret knowledge systems”, “the apartheid culture of deniability”, “the ghettoization of social knowledge” and “media censorship” (2002: 236–237). Feldman cautions that despite the work of the TRC in the transition years to undo this institutionalised control of the narrative in the media, the effects of this system will still have an influence in post-apartheid society on either how the media present information about violence to the public or on how various population groups respond to the information presented. “The effect of information stratification by race, class and locale, and by disinformation and censorship, is still evident today. The fragmentation of social knowledge, historical recollection and cultural memory cannot be underestimated in post-apartheid South Africa” (Feldman, 2002: 237).

indirectly. Anderson and Menon's work suggests that for theatre scholars and practitioners wanting to investigate how violence is staged, the interactions between how individuals perceive violence, how individuals react to violence, and how violence is staged are the most important considerations; making the term ‘performance studies’ more appropriate than ‘theatre studies’ as it explores the phenomena as it exists both within and without the theatrical space.

The violence associated with the transition years of the early 1990s was well covered in both South African and international news media and is believed to have encouraged many white South Africans to fear the process of election, the transition to a new government, and having to interact with the other racial groups of South Africa. Shubane (2001: 187) suggests that the uninterrupted flow of news coverage describing violent turbulence in society that occurred between the coverage of political violence in the early 1990s and the coverage of criminal violence in the later 1990s created the public impression that the two forms of violence were somehow linked and that a violent society was beyond the abilities of the police to contain. Of course, available data such as crime statistics and victim surveys demonstrated that these forms of violence were in fact two separate societal problems, but these fearful beliefs became entrenched: "The theme of the 'dramatic' increase in all types of crime, particularly violent crime, dominated the media, dinner-party conversations, discussions by young white professionals considering emigration, and business and investor conferences" (Minnaar, Pretorius & Wentzel, 1998: 45). As Shaw observes, this hearsay is one of the ways in which the current ideas and attitudes about the criminalised nature of South Africa and the 'crime wave' took hold and spread.

The lack of statistics [...] means that reference to data is replaced by sweeping statements on television, radio and in the public realm to the effect that 'crime has increased dramatically in the new South Africa', even when the data shows that many crime types (such as homicide) are high, but have not increased (Shaw, 2002: 85).

Misrepresentations of violence may not always be intentional, but the mass media are certainly responsible (and should therefore be accountable) for the way they choose to frame criminality and reinforce the notion of the crime wave, in South Africa. In some instances, the media framing of the crime wave in mass news media and popular culture has been accused of entrenching many of the prejudicial ideas about how crime proliferates in this country as it has been inherited from the propaganda of the apartheid government. As will be discussed further in section 2.2.4, these perceptions have been more noticeable within certain population groups in South Africa. These perceptions have also been shown to be problematic as they influence the allocation of resources that could protect communities from the societal factors that contribute to potential victimisation.

Unsurprisingly, some South Africans are victimised by crime more than others. The threat of victimisation, as is the case in all countries, is determined by where individuals live and work and how they go about their daily lives. Apartheid sought to control exactly these features of the society, and has left a legacy in which the relationship between race and class is still a significant determinant of victimisation in the country (Shaw, 2002: 48–50).

To refer once again to the hypothesis of this study - as supported by Blumberg's and Flockemann's observations about contemporary South African theatre's responsibility to represent the multiplicity of stories of those previously marginalised by apartheid - the mainstream media have a significant role to play in the shaping of perceptions of the crime wave in South Africa.

South Africans have relied on - and continue to rely on - the SAPS released crime statistics as determinants of their risk of potential victimisation and safety. However, despite the inefficiencies inherent to the system to obtain these figures (refer to section 2.2.3) and their resultant inaccuracies, these statistics (used in conjunction with other survey data) provide the most relevant evidence about how, where and to whom crime is happening (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008). Crime is concentrated in poor areas such as the townships as a result of the combination of poverty (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008) and a lack of access to policing services.

In broad terms, crime proliferates where there is a combination of societal problems such as poverty and inequality between the rich and poor, unemployment, a history of violence and deep-rooted patriarchy. Easy access to firearms/ guns, high levels of substance abuse and limited access to essential services all feed into creating a society that is particularly vulnerable to both victimisation and a high incidence of offenders (Rasool et al. in Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 105).

This is true in other countries such as Brazil (also a transitioning society) and parts of the United States of America (Shubane, 2001). It can be said that the class divide in contemporary South Africa still very much echoes the race divide of apartheid-era South Africa. "While races continue to be central to an understanding of victimisation patterns, this is only because these divisions match wealth and property ownership which generally determine lifestyle patterns, as well as the place and type of residence" (National Victims of Crime Survey in Shaw, 2002: 50–51). The middle class is still predominantly white and the working class is still predominantly black and coloured. "No amount of political rhetoric about building a new democratic society (except perhaps in the initial stage of collective enthusiasm) matches the economic reality of unequal access to the new opportunities for

wealth” (Shaw, 2002: 61). This statement by Shaw was made more than a decade ago, but refers to structural challenges in society that are difficult to address and are understood to take transitioning societies a long time to properly address (Shubane, 2001). According to the Human Sciences Research Council:

Very wealthy citizens (those earning above R16,660 a month) report the lowest levels of insecurity, presumably because they are in a position to protect themselves and their property to a greater extent than the general population. Those in the middle-income group (earning between R4,160 and R8,329 per month) have by far the highest levels of fear – varying between 53 and 60 per cent against a national average of 47 per cent (Human Sciences Research Council in Shaw, 2002: 91).

The middle classes appear to be typically the most fearful of - and least affected by - violent crime. But, it is their vociferous complaints about the crime wave that attract most of the media and government official's attention to their experiences of victimisation.²⁴ “It is seldom the poor and vulnerable who bring pressure to bear on government to secure their safety. As in other societies, this is largely the prerogative of the middle classes who are more likely (no matter what crimes they fear) to be targeted by crimes of property rather than of violence” (Shaw, 2002: 51). And yet, as is further discussed in section 2.2.4 in reference to the 2009 case of Brandon Huntley as discussed in “Race, Class and Violent Crime in South Africa: Dispelling the ‘Huntley thesis’”²⁵ (Silber & Geffen, 2009), the insecurity and fear of crime among middle-class South Africans dominates the popular discourse and mass media coverage of the criminalised society, despite the fact that they are not most vulnerable to potential victimisation.

2.2.3 South African crime statistics and how they are recorded

In the 1990s, despite the transition to democracy, most aspects of South African life were analysed according to the social groupings created by the apartheid system. In this way a direct comparison could be drawn between living conditions during apartheid and those after apartheid. Crime and victimology were treated no differently.

²⁴ “[T]here is strong evidence showing that reported victimisation levels tend to increase with education, which is obviously (and particularly in South Africa) linked to income” (Silber & Geffen, 2009: 37).

²⁵ Brandon Huntley was granted asylum in Canada after his lawyers managed to convince an immigration review board that “the ANC government was failing to protect the white minority from criminal violence perpetuated by black South Africans” (Silber & Geffen, 2009: 36). This rather disingenuous claim is dubbed ‘The Huntley thesis’ by Silber and Geffen and refers to a growing belief amongst white South Africans that they are disproportionately victimised and that the violent crime rate is in fact related to race-based violence.

However, after the first decade of democracy there was a shift in thinking and the idea of identifying new ways to define social groups in South Africa gained wider currency (Burgess, 2002). Several different ways of classifying South Africans emerged and were used simultaneously. This meant that the procedures for collecting crime statistics were constantly changing, often on an annual basis, making it difficult to effectively compare crime rates from one year to the next.

Shaw points out that recording crime in South Africa, “as is the case in other countries, relies on a two-stage process: victims and bystanders reporting individual incidents of crime and the police recording them” (2002: 44). The effectiveness of the process of recording crime is therefore dependent on whether or not victims or bystanders choose to report the crime, how accurately they report the crime, and how efficiently the police process their report. There are thus three stages of this crucial procedure where miscommunication could lead to incorrect recording of criminal acts. As Holtmann and Domingo-Swartz (2008: 99–104) and others highlight, it is therefore important to take cognisance of the following facts when studying the available crime statistics: firstly, some crimes are not as readily reported to the police as others because victims find the process to be hostile;²⁶ secondly, some victims do not have easy access to the police service (for example, the local police station may be geographically too far away to justify the trip to formally report a crime); thirdly, because South Africa has eleven official languages, citizens reporting crime may struggle to communicate with officers who do not share the same first language as themselves, leading to crimes being incorrectly or inaccurately recorded; lastly, police officers may lack the education and language skills needed to properly prepare case dockets and other official documentation associated with recording crimes, making the accuracy of certain recorded instances of crime open to suspicion.

The amalgamation of the eleven police agencies of apartheid South Africa into the South African Police Service (or SAPS) (refer to section 2.2.5 for further discussion), and the reassignment of the collection and recording of crime statistics to the newly established national Crime Information Centre, also had a significant impact on the crime statistics in the 1990s (Minnaar *et al.*, 1998: 48). It is also important to note that the SAPS crime statistics released to the public annually do not reflect the latest data available; these statistics are released to the media in September every year and reflect the previous financial year, rather than the previous calendar year. The crime statistics are typically six months out of date

²⁶ The willingness of citizens to report crime to the police is dependent on whether or not they have faith that something can and will be done about their case. “In South Africa, this process has been complicated by the historic divide between the people and the police” (Shaw, 2002: 44). In the case of gender-based violence and sexual assault, victims feel insecure about reporting to police because of police insensitivity and because very often the perpetrator is known to them (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 100–101; Jewkes, Vetten, Jina, Christofides, Sigsworth *et al.*, 2012: 17).

upon their release in September, and are always met by doubts about the accuracy of their figures (Burger *et al.*, 2010: 3). While it is generally acknowledged that the reported crime statistics released by the Police Commissioner every year are inaccurate indicators of crime levels in the country, there are certain valuable insights to be gained by monitoring these statistics. The crimes that provide what is considered to be the most reliable data for statistics are the ones that involve insurance or life insurance, namely murder, hijacking and house burglary (Shaw, 2002; Bruce, 2010a: 15). The first two are categorised as 'violent interpersonal crimes', while the third is usually categorised as 'property crime'. However, as the crime wave has intensified, house burglaries in South Africa have become increasingly violent. The more vigilant and sophisticated home and car owners become about protecting their property with alarms, dogs, special glass and other private security measures, the more criminals have had to resort to using more brutal forms of interpersonal violence to gain access to property (Shaw, 2002).

Crimes that involve victims reporting to an organisation that functions separately to the SAPS - such as murders (mortuaries), hijackings (insurance companies) and house or business robberies (insurance companies) - have been shown to be more reliable as the SAPS figures can be compared against available data from the secondary body (Burger, 2009: 3).

The ISS victim survey is a publication of the Institute for Security Studies that is released once every four years. It is intended to reflect the experiences of a sample of South Africans from different areas and socio-economic backgrounds in terms of their exposure to various forms of crime. These studies ask questions about perceived risk and perceived safety and provide investigators with valuable insights into the types of crime feared by different communities and why. These victim surveys, however, are to be read with caution: there are a host of reasons why respondents might misunderstand questions or answer incorrectly. It has already been mentioned that public communication in South Africa is often very rudimentary in response to dealing with the difficulties of having eleven official languages. The ISS and Stats SA have in the last decade started using interviewers from a variety of population groups to conduct their surveys for this reason. For example, researchers have discovered that women typically feel more comfortable with expressing themselves to other women; men respond to men questioning them completely differently to women questioning them (particularly in the more traditional patriarchal cultures in South Africa); senior citizens feel more comfortable relating to someone closer to their age; and respondents talk more freely with interviewers who speak the same first language as they do (Burton *et al.*, 2004). This shift in procedure has greatly improved the accuracy of results presented in the victim

surveys (Burton *et al.*, 2004). However, the surveys still remain reflections of public opinion rather than providing well-proven scientific evidence of crime incidents. These victim surveys prove very valuable in a discussion such as this one of the crime wave in South Africa which, as it has been shown, is largely reliant on public perception rather than fact. They are also very useful to theatre-makers as they reflect actual opinions, feelings and experiences of individuals, which has been stated is the preferred reference point when staging the criminalised society. But, as Silber and Geffen (2009: 37–38) reveal, several widely publicised articles that have based crime levels solely on the results of the victim surveys (rather than the SAPS or Stats SA statistics) have been produced, but these results are only valuable when used in conjunction with the other crime data.

Bruce (2010a) suggests that the decreasing crime rate as it appears after the 2003/4 financial year has less to do with improved police strategies or improved socio-economic development (including efforts to address the societal causes of crime), but is more a result of the reporting practices of the police. The rate of violent crimes plummeted around the same time that the government announced an endeavour to reduce crime by seven to ten per cent per year in 2004 (Bruce, 2010a). This announcement certainly provides possible motive for non-recording of crime by police officers. Well-performing police stations are often rewarded financially whilst under-performing police stations are seen as an embarrassment to senior officials, politicians, and communities. This has little to do with whether or not they are effective or if their work has a lasting effect on the community they serve; police officers might simply chase numbers in order to meet performance targets (Bruce, 2011).

In contrast to the 2003/2004 crime statistics, those for 2006/2007 revealed a significant downward trend in contact crimes. These statistics also showed that crimes heavily dependent on police action increased significantly thereby reaffirming that combating crime is a priority action. They are also an indication that SAPS and other policing agencies are doing their utmost to combat these crimes, which are also strong generators of other offences (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 99).

However, as has been discussed, several of these contact crimes (or interpersonal crimes) occur outside of the operational parameters of the SAPS and are generally speaking unresponsive to changes or improvements in police tactics or resources. It was therefore doomed to be an impossible task that would invariably tempt police into manipulating figures to satisfy politicians. “It is thus not only counter-productive to measure police performance by reductions in crime types over which they have little control, but [it] also creates the perverse incentive to under-record these types of crimes” (Gould, Burger & Newham, 2012: 7).

2.2.4 Perceptions of an increase in the brutality of interpersonal crimes

Cruelty can be defined as behaviour or attitudes which disregard, or take pleasure in the pain and suffering of, others (Stevenson, 2007a); and *brutality* as cruelty enacted with violence (Stevenson, 2007b). “When violence becomes unnecessary, excessive and unreasonable, it can be termed ‘brutality’. Brutality is often accompanied by disrespect for human dignity and the absence of moderation, reticence, mercy or consideration of others” (Gove in van Eeden, Bornman & Wentzel, 1998: 5). This study recognises that cruelty and brutality may therefore be used interchangeably, particularly as part of the public discourse around the nature of violent crimes. The media and the public are most concerned by the frequency of reports of crimes that display an element of cruelty, and by the need to understand what circumstances might create the kind of people who perpetrate these crimes. Van Eeden et al. describe ‘aggression’ as any behaviour that intends to injure someone physically or psychologically and ‘aggressiveness’ as “a relatively persistent readiness to become aggressive in a variety of different situations” (1998: 5). They have taken their definition from Berkowitz (1993), but he states that injury is not always the main objective of aggression; therefore, a perpetrator can exhibit cruelty/brutality and aggressiveness, or cruelty/brutality without being aggressive.

There has been a perceived escalation in the levels of cruelty being used in various international incidents of violence and violent crime over the last two decades (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 1); it would be presumptuous, however, to assume that this means that we are living in a particularly violent, brutal or cruel period of human history. It seems justified to claim that there has been an increase in overt attempts at cruelty or brutality in large-scale acts of violence (particularly terrorism). The fear, horror and distress that repeated exposure to this sort of extreme violence causes has a destructive effect on social cohesion and social development. The psychological and emotional effects of this second-hand exposure to violence and cruelty also have an impact on how individuals conduct their lives; the fear and anxiety resulting from prolonged exposure can negatively affect productivity at work, family bonds and emotional relationships, social freedom of movement, and the desire to aspire to improved living conditions (Rader in Renzetti & Edleson, 2008: 253–254).

In “Anger, hatred, or just heartlessness? Defining gratuitous violence” (2010b) criminologist David Bruce discusses the perceived brutality often associated with violent crime in South Africa, and introduces the terms ‘instrumental violence’ and ‘expressive violence’. Bruce describes ‘instrumental violence’ as that which is used purely as a means to extract something (such as property, compliance, or information) from the victim, and ‘expressive violence’ as that which is used as an emotional expression rather than as a means to

achieve leverage over another person (2010b: 14). Brutality, then, describes an extreme and unnecessary level of force used by a perpetrator on a victim. It also suggests a lack of empathy for the victim and a cruelty of nature on the part of the perpetrator. Bayley and Mendelsohn affirm that brutality could also be applied to various forms of verbal abuse, as brutality is in essence a form of mistreatment (in Smit & Cilliers, 1998: 213).

The perception that crime in South Africa has a particularly cruel or brutal slant to it has been perpetuated by the media. This is a view popularly held by middle-class South Africans and as Silber and Geffen (2009) demonstrate in their article "Race, class and violent crime in South Africa: Dispelling the 'Huntley thesis'", it is not a perception devoid of prejudicial influences. Bruce further suggests that the assertions of a brutal aspect to violent crime in South Africa "may be a way of reinforcing racialized beliefs that the cruel nature of violence in South Africa is linked to the attributes of some or other South African population group" (2010b: 13). While Bruce is vague about which population group he is referring to, Silber and Geffen attribute this reinforcing of racialised beliefs to middle-class white South Africans (as in the case of Huntley, cited earlier) who use the idea that black South Africans are targeting them as justification to receive political asylum in European or American countries. It remains unclear from their article whether they believe Huntley truly felt that his life was at risk or whether he was cynically trying to manipulate the immigration laws of Canada. But, for the purposes of this study, it should rather be noted that this is a perception of the crime wave in South Africa that is held by a significant group of South Africans and that this perception influences the behaviour of these citizens. It should also be noted that perceptions are not simply influenced by the media, but that the stimulus received from the media is filtered through social systems such as race, class and culture.

As has been discussed, perceptions have as much power (if not more) over social behaviour and self-defence measures as facts do, and thus have an equal importance to this study. The media report a steady stream of particularly gruesome cases of violent crimes in South Africa and whether or not these acts are particular to South Africa, the fact that grotesque and brutal violence is happening to innocent victims (vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and the disabled) is certainly a cause for concern and engagement in order to minimise the instances of this violence.

The brutality of the crimes reported in the news media and described on social media is considered by some to be the most remarkable aspect of the criminalised South African society. There are several high-profile interpersonal crimes in the media that can be clearly identified as having an impact on the public perception that criminals in South Africa are particularly brutal and crimes involve an excessive level of physical harm. These cases

elicited national and sometimes international interest from both the media and the public. The case that inspired Lara Foot Newton's play *Tshepang*, for example, was the first case of the rape of a baby that made national headlines and gripped the public's imagination. This sparked a series of news reports of babies and children being raped over the next three years; a phenomenon that South Africans may now be more familiar with, but which caused an upheaval in the popular discourse at the time. Later news reports revealed that the alleged cause of this apparent rape spree was the misguided belief - disseminated by traditional healers - that raping a virgin would cure AIDS.²⁷ These crimes caused a national and international uproar, and placed significant pressure on the government to do something about the problem. This resulted in the government creating various bodies to investigate the moral character of South Africa and its citizens, none of which produced any serious responsive action (Rauch, 2005).

According to research by psychologists and epidemiologists, the physical, psychological and emotional effects of being victimised, or witnessing brutal violent crime, are long-term and very difficult to undo or resolve. The high percentage of South Africans who are likely to have been affected by becoming a victim of, or witnessing, a brutal violent crime is truly disturbing and the trauma that they will have to negotiate in their daily lives in order to be functioning citizens poses a very real and crippling threat to development over the next decade or so (Gampel, 2000; Renzetti & Edleson, 2008).

For the purposes of this study, the term 'brutality' will be used when referring to 'expressive violence' which exhibits signs of cruelty disproportionate to the level of force needed for the violence to be classified as 'instrumental'. The study is not concerned with the extent to which this brutality may or may not be a part of violent crime in South Africa, but is rather acknowledging that there is a brutal, cruel and excessive aspect to violent crime in South Africa that is perceived by some to be of concern.

²⁷ The myth that men were raping babies and virgin girls because they believed it would cure or protect them from HIV/AIDS was widely accepted, despite the fact that there is scant evidence to prove that it was true (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008).

2.2.5 The post-apartheid transformation of the criminal justice system

In 1998 (only four years after the first democratic elections) Minnaar et al. observed that in contrast to what appeared as 'improved crime statistics', the crime situation had actually deteriorated:

This was due to perceptions about the growing ineffectiveness of the SAPS as a result of underfunding, the loss of skilled personnel through resignation and retrenchment, shortages in manpower, equipment and skills, poor management, plunging morale, low pay and affirmative action (Minnaar *et al.*, 1998: 48).

It has been stated that the current SAPS developed out of the apartheid state's militarised South African Police (SAP) and the various police services of the 'independent' Bantustan states and consists of senior officers who for the most part started their career/public service in the apartheid-era, as well as a younger group of officers trained post-apartheid at the new police colleges (Laufer, 2001). In his chapter in *Crime Wave: The South African Underworld and its Foes* (Steinberg, 2001a), Laufer highlights the various ways in which this amalgamation of forces led to (and continues to contribute to) several challenges in executing effective policing in the country, some of which will be discussed in this section.

During apartheid, policing was segregated - in accordance with the rest of the social structure - along predominantly racial lines. The policing of the cities was taken care of by SAP and, as Shubane (2001) observes, "[i]t could be argued that South Africa experienced an attempt, lasting decades, to restrict crime to low-income areas and so to protect the affluent: the fact that eighty per cent of policing facilities were concentrated in the suburbs was testimony to this" (2001: 8). The townships or 'black neighbourhoods' had little to no access to police services; and in fact, as Steinberg (2001a) argues, if the SAP were present in the townships it was not to protect its inhabitants or investigate and solve crime: "For the better part of this century, policing black communities in South Africa really boiled down to two imperatives: controlling the movement of people, and squashing political opposition" (2001a: 7).

In the Bantustans, policing was the mandate of the respective government and thus each separate police force was structured, staffed and operated differently. "All eleven policing agencies had different uniforms, rank structures and conditions of service and were established under different legislation".²⁸ It is also important to consider that the Bantustans were a construct of the apartheid government designed specifically to deny the black

²⁸ Weber 2014 found at <http://www.saps.gov.za/about/history.php>

population any agency or social mobility or development, resulting in the law enforcement capabilities of these police forces and governments being severely limited. If a criminal case was deemed serious enough (for example, a case of murder or rape) it had to be deferred to a South African Republic court as the Bantustan governments did not have the authority nor the infrastructural ability to handle such cases (Andrade, 1985). Minnaar et al. (1998) describe how dire circumstances in these 'homelands' had become towards the collapse of the apartheid system in the early 1990s, with reference to the Transkei: law enforcement had run out of funds, corruption was rife and there was a total breakdown of essential services resulting in banditry and violent unrest. "Police stations did not have any functioning vehicles, there were shortages of petrol and spares and funds for the feeding of prisoners had been eroded by theft or administrative bungling" (Minnaar *et al.*, 1998: 35).

When the transformation of South African society became increasingly unavoidable in the 1990s, the eleven police agencies had to form a unified and cohesive police service and attempt to change public perceptions of the police as 'thugs in the government's employ' to that of a service that all South Africans could rely on. In its challenge to come across as uniform and non-biased, the newly formed SAPS needed to achieve two conflicting aims: "abandon their authoritarian past and [...] repel the crime wave, or, as it is sometimes put in the corridors of police headquarters, 'to transform under fire'" (Shaw, 2002: xi).

Laufer (2001: 14) quotes a senior Scotland Yard officer and Commonwealth violence monitor, who was in South Africa for a few months in 1993, saying that the transformation of the police force could be as easy as firing "every officer from colonel to general and rebuild[ing] command and control from scratch" (2001: 14). The ANC (African National Congress) seemed to have several more pressing matters to attend to during the transfer of power and transition to democracy, including managing public sentiment, questionable policing skills and a fear of white insurgency lead by former security forces (Laufer, 2001; Steinberg, 2001b). The transformation of the South African Police Force was therefore largely overlooked by government for the first four years of democracy. Laufer (2001) explains the incident that led to this cautiousness: a white supremacist group, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), invaded the former Bantustan of Bophuthatswana in March 1994 and the South African Defence Force (SADF) was quickly deployed to aid Lucas Mangope, the dictator of the Bantustan. The SADF demonstrated discipline and cohesion in this operation which concerned the transitional government: "The SADF had firepower, and command and control ability [...] and battle and dirty tricks experience vastly superior to anything the old South African Police (SAP) could muster. It had a network of equipment depots and white part-time soldiers and reservists across the entire country" (Laufer, 2001:

15). The South African Police would have been unable to stop an insurgency had the South African Defence Force launched one.

Changes to the police force during the 1990s were, therefore, largely cosmetic (Steinberg, 2001b: 9). The structures and day-to-day operating procedures of the SAPS did not change significantly from those of the SAP; most officers were more comfortable doing things in the way they had used to amidst all the social and political upheaval of the time.

[A]fter the first few years after democratisation in 1994, the SAPS gradually forewent the concept [of community policing] in favour of more traditional law enforcement and punitive methods of crime fighting. This was largely as a result of political and public pressures on the police to 'do something' about the high levels of violent crime, and the fact that the motivation for community policing was more concerned with achieving political than policing objectives (Burger, 2011: 15).

The first democratic government strongly opposed the rising crime rate in South Africa, but their focus was on transforming and legitimising the police service in the public arena, not on crime fighting (Shaw, 2002: 87 and 119).

The changing of the guard in 1999 following the second democratic national elections saw a significant change in the government's approach to crime:

It was only in the late 1990s, when crime became one of the presiding preoccupations of South Africans and foreign observers alike, that the politics of fighting crime began to eclipse the politics of political containment. The project to transform the police force into a veritable crime fighting institution only really began in earnest with the inauguration of Thabo Mbeki as president (Steinberg, 2001b: 9).

Statements by senior police officials became a lot more aggressive at this point: "we are now going to deal with criminals in the same way a dog deals with a bone" (Shaw, 2002: 86). This statement by then Minister for Safety and Security, Steve Tshwete, was clearly an overt threat to criminals that greater levels of physical violence would be used to deal with them in future and did not receive much public opposition. "Tshwete's statements tapped into a deep vein of public resentment of crime. The focus on the 'fact' that criminals had more rights than victims is one which resonated particularly deeply" (Shaw, 2002: 86). Citizens agreed that a harsher response to criminals was necessary and this approach saw an increase in police using violence on criminals that consequently led to an increase in cases of police brutality and criminal charges being laid against police officers. By 2002, according to a United

Nations survey, South Africa had achieved the lowest levels of public satisfaction with policing amongst developing countries (Shaw, 2002: 89). The focus of the new Minister of Police (in 2002) was on recruiting and deploying more police officers (Laufer, 2001: 21–22) rather than employing ‘tougher measures’. And yet as Burger *et al.* point out, despite increases in budget and recruitment of new personnel, the crime most susceptible to effective policing – that is, organised violent crime - remained unacceptably high (Burger *et al.*, 2010). Fourteen years and three Ministers of Police later, none of the tactics employed seemed to have done much to improve crime statistics, police performance or public perceptions. South Africa’s present-day police service can be considered to be ineffective for several reasons (Burger, 2011). Firstly, the rate of violent crime is often compared to international statistics and found to be excessively high; secondly, there is the very low conviction rate per number of case files (referred to as dockets) opened; and thirdly, as former Minister of Police Nathi Mtshwa explained in a press conference, the SAPS is not a crime prevention service, but a crime detection service and because of their limited resources, they simply cannot be expected to deal with crimes before they happen. Despite these mass recruitment efforts, there is still a lack of officers in many areas, particularly in high-density areas like the townships and low-density rural areas, where a handful of officers are expected to police vast areas of land. There is also a very alarming shortage of resources being reported (Bruce, 2011: 10), such as police stations that do not have a single bullet-proof vest available or police being unable to respond to calls because their one available van had mechanical failures, and this weakness in capacity has become one of the central discussion points in the public’s discourse about the criminalised nature of society.

In short, it can be shown that the SAPS are struggling with a lack of training, lack of effective management and leadership, corruption in the ranks and in leadership, emotional and psychological scars, a lack of resources to adequately protect themselves and citizens, and ill-conceived government policies that are difficult or confusing to implement (Bruce, 2011: 9–10). As the police service, they receive the brunt of the blame when it comes to the violent nature of South African society:

If democratic policing is what we want in South Africa it must be obvious that the current and ongoing state of affairs as far as police and policing are concerned, cannot be tolerated. It may be acceptable in an authoritarian state, but not in a democracy. [...] It is not in the interest only of all South Africans, but also of the professional and dedicated police members who are inevitably caught up and tarnished by what is happening around them (Burger, 2011: 20).

2.2.6 International perceptions of the South African crime wave and international crime statistics

Shaw states that, to many South Africans, “the problem has assumed the dimensions of a full-scale crisis as the country is seen to be flooded by a ‘crime wave’. Crime is seen both by political elites and the media as a threat to the stability of the new democracy and a deterrent to investment” (Shaw, 2002: xii). The number of crimes being committed in proportion to the number of citizens living in the country has landed South Africa right at the top of the various published lists ranking most violent and most crime-ridden countries in the world. For example, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime data, South Africa had the highest recorded murder rate in the world in 2004.²⁹ These statistics have only further fuelled local and international perceptions that crime in South Africa is out of control. Since being ranked on such lists in the mid-1990s, reported crime levels in South Africa have been gradually declining or, at the very least, remaining constant;³⁰ yet the persisting perception (both locally and internationally) nearly two decades later is that the crime wave is still on the rise. “One of the key controversies in South Africa’s crime debate is how the country compares to other jurisdictions in terms of crime. [...] The government has been sensitive to criticism that the country is the crime capital of the world and has suggested that international comparisons on the currently available data are inaccurate” (Shaw, 2002: 52). There is something to be said about this claim, as it is possible for researchers to identify several anomalies about the process of gathering and presenting data in these international studies. Firstly, it has been observed by Shaw (2002) and Burger (2009) that not all countries participate; the studies are usually conducted by international bodies such as the United Nations and Interpol, to which several countries do not even belong, therefore excluding them from these surveys.³¹ Secondly, it has been observed in the *Global Study on Homicide* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013: 99–103) that the individual countries participating in these surveys and studies typically send their crime statistics to the centralised agency without the agency participating in any of the primary levels of data capturing. The agency therefore has no idea whether or not the information that they have

²⁹ South Africa had the highest recorded murder rate in the world in 2004 according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s report: an average of 54,25 intentional homicides per 100,000 of the population. In the same year, Columbia had 53,3; Côte d’Ivoire 45,7; Jamaica 44,45; Burundi 35,4; The Democratic Republic of Congo 35,2; Venezuela 34,75; and El Salvador 31,95 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). It is important to note, however that South Africa submits a number for murder *and* attempted murder, whereas most of the countries on the list submitted a number that only reflected murders (Shaw, 2002: 52–53).

³⁰ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s 2013 *Global Study on Homicide* listed South Africa as having the tenth-highest rate of intentional homicides per 100,000. The top ten were as follows: Honduras 90,4; Venezuela 53,7; Belize 44,7; El Salvador 41,2; Guatemala 39,9; Jamaica 39,3; Lesotho 38; Swaziland 33,8; Saint Kitts and Nevis 33,6; and South Africa 31 per 100,000 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013: 123–133).

³¹ “Many developing countries do not disclose their reported crime levels (if indeed they collect statistics at all) and so South Africa is seldom measured against its peers – only a handful of African countries, for example, submit crime statistics to the international police organization, Interpol” (Shaw, 2002: 52).

received has been obtained freely, fairly and accurately, or whether it is in a compatible format. An example of this is offered by Shaw, who observes that some countries record intentional unnatural deaths as ‘murders’, some as ‘homicides’, some as ‘unnatural deaths’, and others as ‘deaths’ (2002: 45). Thirdly, these surveys do not compare countries with a similar socio-economic status or population numbers, but simply list all of the countries that have submitted data in one report. Readers of these reports can therefore start drawing comparisons between the various countries, despite the fact that the information presented is not in a format suitable for accurate and effective comparison.³²

2.3 Global patterns of violence and trauma

In order to understand the various perceptions of the criminalised society in South Africa, and the ways in which these perceptions influence the plays being produced, it is important to understand that South African theatre dealing with crime and violence exists within a broader context of international theatre and performance attempting to define, explore and discuss these issues. This section will be a discussion of the global trends in violence (such as terrorism, mass shootings, violence in the media, and the use of the internet in promoting and opposing violent behaviour and in distributing violent media) that have influenced popular culture and the arts around the world and, consequently, in South Africa. The way in which violence, conflict and crime are discussed has changed significantly in the last thirty years. Most advancement in the fields of crime prevention, crime detection and criminology has occurred since the 1980s. There has also been a greater focus on understanding the psychological, emotional and social effects of victimisation and on treating them with the same importance as the efforts to minimise criminality.

2.3.1 September 11 and terrorism

Discourse around violence and violent criminal behaviour has increased during the past two decades (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 1) to such an extent that violence has become a popular topic in political, academic and pop culture spheres. The arts have also contributed many books, documentaries, television shows and films about violence and violent crimes: “our historical moment has witnessed the increasing mediatization of violence saturating the public sphere and creating new spectacular forms of non-state terror while rendering banal institutional forms of state terror” (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 3).

³² “The 1999 Interpol report revealed that the high percentage of theft is not peculiar to South Africa. Other countries also have high percentages of theft; Denmark (54%), Australia (46%), France (41%), Germany (30%), Finland (29,8%), Canada (30,3%) and Norway (29,8%). What differentiates South Africa is once again the scale of the problem where local percentages are worked out from a very high total number of crimes recorded” (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 103).

Major cases of violence or violent crime that have radically altered the public's perception and garnered international attention are: the mass school shootings in the United Kingdom in 1996 and in the United States of America in 1999, respectively, which shocked people around the globe; the terrorist attacks of 2001 in New York, London and Madrid; the subsequent 'war on terror' that saw Afghanistan and Iraq being invaded by American military forces; which also resulted in the Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib scandals of gross human rights violations being uncovered in these and other American armed force's prisons in the decade after the 2000s; and the terrorist attack in the famously tranquil nation of Norway in 2011.

In response to the growing need in various fields of enquiry to understand violence in the world since the end of World War Two (Renzetti & Edleson, 2008) – and in particular in response to the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Virginia in 2001 - significant and wide-ranging fields of inquiry have emerged to quantify and discuss the causes and effects of violence on communities, nations and individuals. Examples of these have been mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter; namely criminology, victimology and epidemiology. These efforts have also been mirrored in the work of artists (across a range of disciplines) attempting to engage with the causes and effects of violence from the individual's perspective, as is discussed in Jisha Menon and Patrick Lenta's *Violence Performed* (2009). The book highlights the emergence of a global trend of artists attempting to articulate the effects that violence has had on individuals and societies. Similar to the context of diverse communities in South Africa, various communities around the world also experience violence and crime very differently. Nations that are technologically advanced and are considered to be politically, socially and economically stable with a low percentage of their population living below the poverty line are commonly referred to as 'developed' or 'first-world' and those that are considered to have high levels of poverty and social instability are considered to be 'developing' or 'third-world'.³³ As has been discussed, the developed world and the developing world have very different problems with violence and violent crime as a result of their differing socio-economic landscapes. The developed societies of the Western nations (such as those of Europe and the North Americas) are characteristically free of internal conflict and do not experience violence on a large scale; with the exception of those forms of violence that they be involuntarily drawn into, such as conflicts between other nations for which they may need to contribute peace-keeping troops as part of their membership of the United Nations. As such, the artists reflecting violent experiences in these Western societies can be said to be most fascinated

³³ The terms 'first-world' and 'third-world' can connote superiority and inferiority respectively by their inclusion of numerical values. This study will therefore avoid further use of these terms.

with violence in the forms of terrorism, conflict and torture, as these forms of violence usually have many victims and involve an element of cruelty and/or brutality (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 2–3).

As discussed in Chapter One, 'violence' can refer to any violation of human rights to safety and freedom. "Violence can be defined as the capacity to impose, or the act of imposing, one's will upon another, where the imposition is held to be illegitimate. Force on the other hand, is the capacity to impose, or the act of imposing, one's will upon another where the imposition is held to be legitimate" (Macfarlane in Smit & Cilliers, 1998: 206). In other words, *violence* is understood to be illegal or deviant, and *force* is understood to be a necessary tool in maintaining social order. While most developed societies frown upon violence (specifically those forms that do not constitute *force*) it remains a prevalent leveller: "Almost every citizen has been touched by some or other form of violence or aggression that has affected his or her property, privacy and human dignity and degraded the quality of his or her life" (Swarts in van Eeden *et al.*, 1998: 2). Beyond that, violence can enact itself on the physical, the psychological or the social level; and depending on the form and severity of the violence in question, an individual may be affected in one of the above-mentioned ways, or all three at once (Suárez-Orozco & Robben, 2000: 1). For this reason, it can be assumed that every person has a tangible point, or points, of reference when understanding violence even if they have not experienced that form of violence personally or directly.

This suggests that while developing and developed societies do not share the same forms of victimisation, people from within either environment can appreciate or at least viscerally respond to artistic representations of violence from other environments without them having had personal experience of that form of violence in that context. Despite this universality associated with experiencing violence, not all forms of violence are quantifiably equal; nor are the potential effects that the various kinds of violence may have on victims and perpetrators. Emotional and verbal violence operates differently from physical violence, and interpersonal violence operates differently from state-sanctioned or organised violence. It is therefore essential that, despite the broad use of the term 'violence', these distinctions and differences not be conflated into a single universal problem. The way that these forms of violence affect individuals and societies differs greatly, and all are dealt with in a variety of ways that do not always have anything in common with one another, despite the fact that individuals may be able to relate to representations of forms of violence that are essentially foreign to them.

2.3.2 Large-scale conflict, trauma and displacement

The most pervasive form of violence in the world in the last two decades has been that related to large-scale conflicts (Suárez-Orozco & Robben, 2000). Wars, civil wars and terrorist attacks have dominated international politics, media and public discourse. These conflicts have stretched across every continent and have (directly or indirectly) affected several countries. These acts of militarised (or at least weaponised) aggression between one group of people and another are often seen by participants or external observers as criminal acts on a large scale. However, this form of criminally motivated violence is not to be confused with the 'criminal violence' or 'violent crime' discussed in this study. This large-scale violence is typically motivated by some dispute over territory or ideology, whereas the small-scale violence associated with crime is typically motivated by profit, greed or the need to exert power over another person. These two forms of violence may have several similarities, but it is important to distinguish between them.

Yolanda Gampel (2000) makes the distinction between large-scale criminality (conflicts) and small-scale criminality (crime) and describes *institutional criminal violence* as situations where large groups of people violate the human rights of other large groups of people in order to acquire power or wealth from them, and *violent crime* as being situations where interpersonal violations of human rights are taking place (2000). According to this model, apartheid can be identified as an example of institutional criminal violence in South Africa's recent history. The trauma of this system of violence is still evident after twenty years of freedom and democracy and therefore has a significant role to play in understanding violence and violent crime in contemporary South Africa.³⁴

While state-sanctioned violence can be explained as part of a justified conflict for national sovereignty or freedom, and institutionalised violence generally forms part of a vision or mission of the institution or group involved, violent crime is almost always viewed as just a means to a criminal end and entirely motivated by self-serving greed.³⁵ While the former acts of violence can be rationalised by some or all involved, the latter is almost always viewed by society as deviant and inexcusable behaviour. This is mainly because *any* criminal behaviour (violent or otherwise) is deemed deviant and unacceptable. "Criminal behaviour has attracted a great deal of attention from those who wish to 'make sense' of it; violent behaviour even more so. Violent crime is frequently branded 'mindless', 'senseless', 'insane'

³⁴ Section 2.2 explores the various ways in which the apartheid system has influenced post-apartheid perceptions of South Africa as being a criminalised society and how the social structures of apartheid have challenged attempts in post-apartheid South Africa to ensure that all citizens feel safe and able to access society freely.

³⁵ "Our hopes and dreams, at times, seem to be overcome by cynicism, self-centredness and fear. This spiritual malaise sows itself as a lack of good spirit, as pessimism, or lack of hope and faith. And from it emerge the problems of greed and cruelty, of laziness and egotism, of personal and family failure. It both helps fuel the problems of crime and corruption and hinders our efforts to deal with them" (Mandela in Rauch, 2005: 15).

– rarely is it portrayed as normal or logical” (Smit & Cilliers, 1998). However, for the career criminal, violent crime may be a necessary means of ensuring survival.

In terms of global trends in violence, *institutional violence* and *organised violence* can be considered the most prolific; particularly in accordance with the amount of news media coverage of these forms of violence. Organised violence is often used in the same context as institutional criminal violence and state-sanctioned violence; however, it is also taken to refer to military actions (be that by a sovereign country or by the United Nations or NATO [the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation]) and military-style operations by terrorist groups (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Organised violence implies groups of people who have a binding agenda that organises them and their resources around inflicting physical violence on their targets. These targets could be individuals, groups of people, social structures or public transportation. Institutional criminal violence differs slightly in that it involves the group of perpetrators making use of legislature or state apparatus to inflict multiple forms of violence on a group of people. These terms are often used interchangeably; but it is useful to understand the distinctions, particularly when discussing how South African violence relates to the international discourse around violence. Many of the terms used to define and understand the various forms of violence, their causes and effects, emerged from societies and researchers primarily concerned with weaponised physical violence and various forms of organised violence. South Africa is not unique in having transitioned out of a situation of institutional criminal violence as late as the 1990s; however there are several unique elements about South Africa’s transition from racially oppressive institutional violence to post-colonial democracy.

Institutional criminal violence is definitely a major international area of concern as it disrupts trade, undermines social development, displaces communities, creates economic burdens, leads to incalculable trauma and emotional devastation, and usually results in massive loss of human life. While such a discussion does not fall within the ambit of this study, violent crime in South Africa can be intrinsically linked to the institutional criminal violence of the apartheid system. One of the reasons for the misinterpretation of crime statistics, and the associated risk of victimisation in South Africa, is that the effects of contemporary violent crime are being confused with the aftermath of the institutional criminal violence in South Africa which is still affecting society twenty years later.³⁶

³⁶ This viewpoint is expressed by Shaw (2002) and was discussed in section 2.2.2.

2.3.3 Cruelty and brutality in the global discourse on contemporary violence

Brutality (discussed in section 2.2.4) has also featured in several foreign incidents which have drawn international news media coverage during the last few decades. The mass school shootings in Scotland and the United States in the 1990s sent shockwaves around the world. In both cases gunmen randomly shot at scholars and teachers, seemingly without warning and without mercy. No-one wanted to believe that children could so cruelly kill other children, as was the case with the teenage gunmen responsible for the Columbine Massacre in the United States. The Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay scandals (of 2003 and 2005 respectively) shattered the view that a savage disregard for human life and dignity was not part of the Western world's way of dealing with conflict. Disturbing photographs and videos of torture taking place in American-run military prisons surfaced on the internet, sparking critical discourse challenging the government policies relating to the war and mounting distrust of politicians amongst young citizens, who were then enjoying (and continue to enjoy) unprecedented access to globally-influenced information courtesy of the internet. Unfortunately, the internet has also created the opportunity for terrorists and criminals to intimidate people across the world via social media. Videos which depict preparations for, and threats of, attacks, and violent physical assaults on victims, are easily produced and uploaded. The secondary influence of this brutality has been shown by researchers to cause long-term emotional and psychological damage to the viewers.

2.3.4 Commonalities associated with violence

Violent societies are typically those that are recognised as: i) currently struggling with criminal violence, or ii) having recently overcome a conflict involving criminal violence. The latter are referred to as 'transitional societies' as the impact of large-scale criminal violence, which usually stems from extreme ideological conflicts, usually takes several generations to dissipate (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Transitional societies do not suffer the same relentless violence that societies battling with criminal violence are forced to deal with, but they do experience far higher levels of violence than societies considered to be stable and peaceful. Hamber proposes that "the very process of transition, whether through negotiated settlement or through violent revolution, will fundamentally impact on the nature and extent of violence after such transition" (1998: 352). While it is generally acknowledged that a transitioning society can expect a high level of violence for several decades following even democratic change, there appears to be no consensus about what form that violence might take (such as military, criminal or political). Hamber further discusses evidence of a rise in violence occurring in Namibia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union both during, and after, their transitions to democracy (1998: 355).

In most transitioning societies there is an expectation that the previously oppressed must be granted access to the resources that they fought to acquire - in some cases at the expense of their previously-advantaged oppressors.³⁷ However, this sense of entitlement can problematically lead to 'Robin Hood'-type exploits by the previously disadvantaged poor to appropriate wealth from the previously advantaged rich. Worse still, these criminal actions of appropriation could come to be viewed by the general public as acceptable or even justifiable symptoms of large-scale societal change (Collins, 2013).

As Shaw (2002) observes, South Africa was considered by many to be one of the transitioning societies at greatest risk of this type of exploitation, because its transformation from an oppressive apartheid society to liberal post-apartheid society was entirely negotiated.

Given the country's history, the attainment of non-racial democracy was regarded as something of a miracle – many had considered the situation unsolvable. Yet, although the society had come to the brink of war, the conflict was resolved through negotiations between 1990 and 1994 and a new society forged from the old (Shaw, 2002: xiii).

Representatives of both the oppressed and the oppressor discussed and argued their way towards socio-political transformation and the transfer of power, rather than resorting to large-scale violence such as a militarised coup d'état or civil war.³⁸ Although this relatively peaceful and undisruptive resolution of conflict can be considered an achievement, the absence of a violent and decisive transfer of resources and power from the 'rich' to the 'poor' has meant that some of these other liminal processes of 'transference of wealth' have become somewhat acceptable in our post-apartheid culture. "It is no surprise that both whites and blacks refer jokingly to having goods 'redistributed' when they are stolen" (Shaw, 2002: 59). The 'crime wave' is perceived by some South Africans as an inevitable consequence of apartheid and a tolerable evil, because there are still so many poor people lacking access to the resources that they had 'struggled' to obtain (Shubane, 2001). For others, this blurring of the distinction between crime and politics "courts all sorts of trouble. Some say it denigrates this country's struggle for freedom. Others say it makes heroes of murderers and thieves and thus saps our country of the will to fight crime" (Steinberg, 2001b: 5). Minnaar et al. offer another perspective of this when they state that:

³⁷ Further reading about 'Transitional Justice' can be found in the *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* on pages 1045-1047 (Bickford, 2005).

³⁸ "It is of course misleading to call the transition to democracy in South Africa peaceful; 16,000 people are estimated to have died in 'political violence' from the mid-1980s" (Shaw, 2002: xii).

Among the first reasons [put forward for the increase in violent crime in South Africa] was that all societies in transition – and particularly one experiencing such dramatic political change as South Africa – experience rising crime, which is in part due to uncertainties experienced by the inhabitants. Furthermore, a society in transition opens up political space and social opportunities which are exploited by many, not least of all by criminals (Minnaar *et al.*, 1998: 46).

There are two commonalities suggested here with reference to transitioning societies: firstly, that the government will most likely have difficulty managing citizens' expectations;³⁹ and secondly, that the structural changes taking place will be exploited by criminals. A third commonality worth mentioning is offered by Shubane, namely that when the government departments and mechanisms are restructured, and resources are re-evaluated and redistributed, shortfalls and discrepancies are uncovered that will potentially limit the new government's ability to function: "Evidence from other societies which have undergone transitions suggests that their capacities are significantly eroded in the process, prompting a loss of ability to perform some functions they might have been able to manage before change began" (Shubane, 2001: 187). Even powerful states have suffered a loss of capacity when it comes to tackling criminality; Russia struggled to deal with organised crime and tax violations after the fall of the Soviet Union, and China suffered economically as a result of unrestrained infringements of copyright law by major companies during its transition (Shubane, 2001: 188).

2.3.5 Human rights to freedom and safety

Crime, particularly violent crime, can be considered a violation of an individual's human rights. Depending on the nature of the crime, several human rights may be violated at once. Violent crime is generally understood to refer to criminal acts where physical force is used by the perpetrator/s to overpower the victim/s in order to achieve their goal.⁴⁰ This means that the crimes in question are specifically *interpersonal crimes* (also known as *contact crime*), as this is the only category of crime where both perpetrator/s and victim/s are in direct physical contact. The National Academy of Sciences defines *interpersonal violence* as "any behaviour by an individual that intentionally threatens, attempts, or inflicts physical harm on others" (Bachman, 2008: 441).

³⁹ "Bronkhorst (1995), in his review of several countries in transition, argues that, in general, as the economy and the authority of new governments consolidate, frustration often increases as the population confronts a rise in unemployment and unequal economic development. The transition itself can therefore result in increased social conflict, violence, crime and – potentially – further oppression" (Hamber, 1998: 362).

⁴⁰ This goal may be premeditated or, as is the case with impulse crimes, a desired outcome for which no plan has been formulated beyond the need to satisfy this desire. In the second instance the physical violence used is therefore a means to an end rather than the intended action.

Interpersonal crime is described by Holtmann and Domingo-Swarts (2008) as being the form of crime that most accurately exemplifies public perceptions about crime in South Africa. It elicits the most intense fear of crime and feeds the insecurity that “best defines South Africans’ collective state of mind about crime - and thus arguably their responses to it” (Holtmann & Domingo-Swarts, 2008: 99). Smit and Cilliers (1998) propose that for an act to qualify as being a violent crime (that is, both violent and criminal) it must meet the following three requirements:

Firstly, there has to be an offender with a motive, predisposition, illness or what might be variously termed by the observer “greed”, “lust”, “aggression” or “sickness”. Secondly, suitable circumstances must exist or be created. Thirdly, there is usually a victim who is vulnerable by virtue of the opportunity he or she provides for the fulfilment of the offender’s needs or desires (1998: 209).

This reiterates the popular phrase used in crime and detective stories – ‘means, motive and opportunity’ - to describe the necessary elements of a crime.

Some researchers and criminologists (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000) also consider crimes where verbal, psychological or emotional violence is used by the perpetrator/s to exert their will over the victim/s to be a kind of violent crime; and suggest that it can be considered as such in and of itself or when used in conjunction with physical violence. The definition of what constitutes a violent crime often depends on the field of enquiry within which it is being discussed. “Psychoanalysts are trained to pay attention to the intrapsychic mechanisms mediating violence and trauma. [...] Anthropologists and cultural psychologists, on the other hand, work on interpersonal and socio-cultural formations around violence and terror” (Suárez-Orozco & Robben, 2000: 11). The disconnected nature of this discussion across different fields of enquiry has already been identified by some as the biggest obstacle to fully understanding and resolving the crime issue both locally and internationally.

For the purposes of this study, violent crime will be used to refer to interpersonal crimes and interpersonal property crime where physical force⁴¹ is used by the perpetrator/s to exert their will over their victim/s. It will not include crimes where verbal, psychological or emotional violence is used, unless they are used in conjunction with physical force. These forms of violence will inevitably be discussed; however, the term ‘violent crime’ will be used as stated.

⁴¹ “Force is the use of physical energy to accomplish a task. Its connotation may be either positive or negative. ‘Force’ and ‘violence’ are used interchangeably to refer to the basically similar behavior of law enforcement agents and upholders of order, whereas ‘violence’ also refers to the conduct of people opposed to the state and the status quo” (Smit & Cilliers, 1998: 205–206).

The large number of deaths and injuries due to violent crime in post-apartheid South Africa is proof that the government has been unable to protect citizens and society from law breakers as promised in the Bill of Rights (Sections 8, 9 and 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa) (Smit & Cilliers, 1998: 202). According to criminologists, law enforcement agencies have two functions: crime prevention and/ or crime detection. A police force that is only able to focus on crime detection is considered to be inadequately equipped to protect citizens from falling victim to crime, as it only has the capacity to detect and solve crimes *after* they have already occurred. This proves insufficient for citizens to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and public spaces. “Violence in the criminal justice system of post-apartheid South Africa is seen to include not only abuse but also neglect, which can be defined as the failure to take care of a charge. The state through its criminal justice system, has failed in this care-taking role” (Smit & Cilliers, 1998: 202).

South Africa can be considered a criminalised society as it has high levels of violent interpersonal crime, high levels of organised crime, and high instances of corruption. These factors, combined with low and slow prosecution rates, lenient jail sentences, and rampant public and media discourse around high levels of brutal and violent crime, clearly position South Africa as a criminalised society (Minnaar *et al.*, 1998). Researchers suggest that an increase in police personnel and resources will not fix South Africa’s problems of criminality on its own, but that a holistic approach from government and communities is needed to combat the social issues that lead people to a life of crime, the inefficiencies of the police, the vulnerability of citizens, and the shortcomings of the judicial system in prosecuting and punishing offenders.

2.4 The effects of living in a state of fear of violent crime

As has been discussed in the introduction to this chapter, victimology studies the nature of the victim’s experience and the extent to which the victim is affected by their experience of the interpersonal criminal act. ‘Fear of crime’ and ‘insecurity’ are two commonly discussed issues within victimology that focus on the emotional aspect of the victim/ potential victim of crimes experience of the criminalised society. The focus of this study is on how individuals experience living in the criminalised society – their emotional and psychological responses – and how this influences their daily actions and behaviour. There is also a spiritual component to the way in which individuals experience and interact with their environment, highlighted in a quotation by former president Nelson Mandela in a footnote on page 53, but this aspect is difficult to quantify or to explain in scientific terms. Research exists (Burton *et al.*, 2004; Nusan Porter, 2005; Muftić, 2008) that identifies certain common potential psychological and emotional responses individuals can have to their documented

experiences of living in a criminalised society, but victimology does not extend to the transcendent experiences that victims or potential victims have in relation to their risk or perceived risk of further victimisation. The previous sections addressed external societal factors that affect how an individual might experience the crime wave. The following sections will discuss the internal (known emotional and psychological) responses an individual might have as a result of living in the criminalised society and how these feelings can affect behaviour.

'Fear of crime' is associated with recognisable behavioural responses, including changes in an individual's daily activities and social mobility in response to the threat of potential victimisation (Rader, 2008: 253–254). Fear of crime is generally acknowledged to be an emotional response that is linked to a psychological state which is influenced by the perceived threat of victimisation: "In general, the concept 'fear of crime' has been used to refer to perceived threats to personal safety rather than threats to property or the more generalized perception of risk" (Holtmann & Domingo-Swartz, 2008: 106).

Fear of crime is not always or only an individual's response to directly falling victim to violent crime and can thus not be said to refer to a healthy and rational response to potential victimisation. It is generally accepted that most rational individuals will take measures to protect themselves, their families and their assets from criminals and violence (Burton *et al.*, 2004). It is also a rational response for victims of crime to take measures after their ordeal to protect themselves from further or future victimisation. However, when criminologists, socialists, psychologists, and other parties interested in this subject, discuss 'fear of crime', they are referring specifically to identifiable social responses, and individual feelings associated with a heightened fear of potential victimisation of crime that is not always based on information relating to an actual risk of victimisation. Regardless of whether the fear of crime experienced is based on actual risk of victimisation or not, it can manifest in an individual as either a rational emotional response (able to be addressed by increased personal security measures) or an irrational emotional response (which can also be referred to as 'paranoia';⁴² a psychological condition which would need to be addressed by medical assistance). This irrational form of fear of crime, or paranoia, is often confused with rational fear of crime, and the condition is thus not easily identified or treated. In order to alleviate this condition the individual would, firstly, need to be in a safe environment; secondly, they would need to *perceive* that environment as being safe; and thirdly, this exposure to safety

⁴² The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Stevenson & Waite, 2011) defines paranoia as "a mental condition characterised by delusions of persecution, unwarranted jealousy, or exaggerated self-importance" or the "unjustified suspicion and mistrust of others" (2011: 1039).

and perceived safety would need to last for a long and uninterrupted passing of time in order to convince the person that they are no longer at risk. In South Africa, the process of helping individuals suffering from fear of crime (specifically paranoia) is therefore hindered at the first phase of treatment: South African society remains unsafe and citizens continue to feel unsafe in their environment.

'Insecurity' is identified as a pervasive feeling of unease caused by vulnerability - or a perceived vulnerability - to danger or risk. It refers to the antithesis of security, which is identified as a feeling of self-assurance, comfort and confidence resulting from the sense that the danger likely to be encountered in the situation or environment is minimal or non-existent. Insecurity can be experienced as a result of a wide variety of stimuli, circumstances or environments. However, for the purpose of the study, it will only be used in reference to perceived social safety (whether or not individuals feel safe in their homes, neighbourhoods and public areas). This form of social insecurity has been found to provoke people to alter their behaviour or environment based on their perceived risk. In South Africa, in particular, certain singular changes in behaviour and social freedom have been observed and discussed by sociologists and criminologists (Shaw, 2002; Mugler, 2005) who are interested in the crime wave and its effect on people's lives. Many of these self-inflicted behaviour modifications are considered by some to be unique to South Africa; others suggest that while these changes in behaviour are not unique, they have very specific aspects that are particular to contemporary South Africans (Vladislavic, 2006). It is this unique combination of elements that becomes an interesting aspect of life in post-apartheid South Africa to study, understand and represent artistically/theatrically.

As Mugler (2005) suggests in her article "To Live and Move in Safety: Fear of Crime, Crime and the Social Consequences of Spatial Security Strategies in Observatory, Cape Town", South Africans are restricting their own freedoms because of their fear of potentially becoming victims of crime.

It is not only more or less taken for granted that crime rates in South Africa are very high but it is also assumed that 'South Africa remains a society divided against itself, no longer by the iron laws of apartheid, but by the fear and the threat of crime' (Mugler, 2005: 1).

According to the Constitution, all South Africans are free to go wherever they like, with whomever they like, whenever they like. However, this is simply not the reality of the current social environment.

It is an accepted fact to most South Africans that if you venture into certain areas after nightfall or participate in certain activities without engaging some form of personal security measure, you are placing yourself at certain and unavoidable risk of falling victim to some form of personal crime (Burton *et al.*, 2004; Hoskin, 2009). The assumption is that despite the availability of access to police or private security measures, it is every individual's personal responsibility to ensure their own safety and that of their property. University of South Africa (UNISA) criminologist Rudolf Zinn made the statement in a newspaper article titled "You Are Not Safe!": "You can't predict where the next attack is going to be, but you can do a lot to not become a victim by being vigilant. People need to take their security seriously and listen to warnings issued by police, community policing forums and neighbourhood watches" (Hoskin, 2009).

2.4.1 Emotional responses and potential behaviour modifications

In Chapter One I introduced what I understand to be the various emotional responses individuals may have to living in a criminalised society and the behaviours these feelings could lead to, focussing specifically on the experiences of victims, potential victims and bystanders. The selected responses are based on an interdisciplinary interpretation of the research gathered over the course of this study as outlined in Chapter One. The following table (Fig. 1) was created to represent these primary and secondary emotions and the kinds of behaviours commonly associated with these emotions. The most common responses are at the top, namely 'fear' and 'insecurity'. The other responses are typically secondary responses that occur only after the primary response of fear or insecurity has been permitted to continue without abatement.

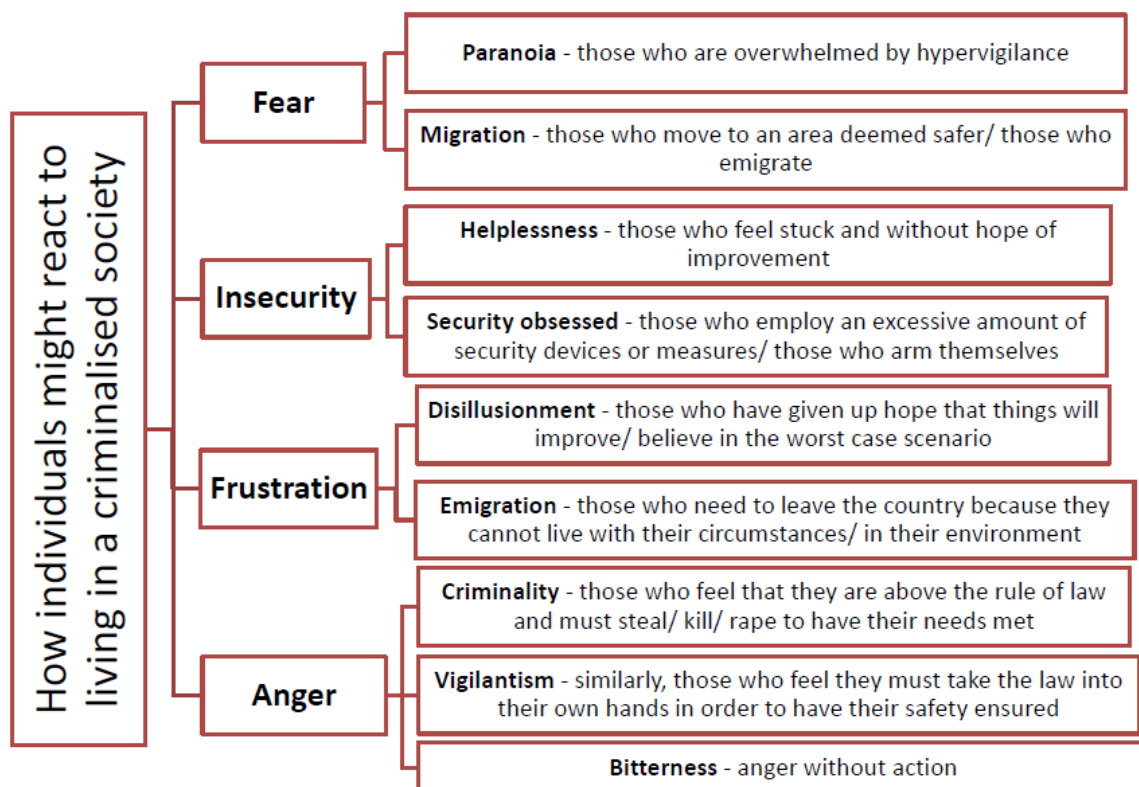


Figure 1: Emotional reactions and secondary responses to living in a criminalised society

As has already been discussed, not much has changed about the criminalised nature of South African society over the last twenty years, most particularly as far as public perceptions of the crime wave are concerned. This means that for most people suffering from fear and/or insecurity, nothing has been done to lessen the severity of the problem expressed by the statistics or media reports, and if their personal experience of the crime

wave has remained unchanged, the criminalised nature of society will appear out of control. As a result, these people will typically develop secondary emotions in response to their untreated feelings of fear and/or insecurity. 'Frustration' or 'insecurity' will typically develop from fear that has not been addressed. 'Anger' is a secondary emotion that is often caused by frustration, confusion, or a perceived insult that has been allowed to escalate. Anger is therefore an indication that the person has felt fearful, insecure or frustrated for some time before the anger developed and further indicates that the initial emotion was left unresolved.

The actions caused by these emotional responses are broadly described in the table; however, the degrees to which these actions are performed depend on the individual's personality and socio-economic circumstances. Some of the responses are active in nature and others are passive. Active responses involve practical or physical behaviours committed towards the accomplishment of a task or tasks related to resolving whatever feelings may have created the active response. These include: 'migration', 'security obsessed', 'emigration', 'criminality' and 'vigilantism'. Migration and emigration refer to exactly the same response, but they are on different branches of the table because it suggests two different emotional responses that could motivate a change in geographic location. Criminality and vigilantism are also very similar, as they both involve criminal behaviour. However, the vigilante's actions are motivated by their need to seek justice beyond the ambit of the law and the criminal's actions are motivated by a need to satisfy economic, social, or sexual desires. Vigilantes also typically view their actions as being beneficial to the larger community or social group with which they identify, whereas criminals' actions seldom benefit anyone other than themselves. The passive responses ('paranoia', 'helplessness', 'disillusionment' and 'bitterness') seldom exhibit any practical activity, although they have been known to have an effect on an individual's recognisable behaviour and responses. Those individuals who respond with paranoia, for example, are not necessarily in a permanent state of fear or insecurity, but their paranoia will determine how they react to certain stimuli. These individuals are less likely to take what are perceived to be unnecessary risks such as going out into their neighbourhoods after dark. Individuals, who respond with bitterness, will likewise be less inclined to participate in communal events and ceremonies, as enjoyment contrasts with their response that South Africa is not a safe or enjoyable place to live in.

2.5 Conclusion: a note on perceptions

It has been shown that perceptions of the crime wave are not reflective of the actual levels of criminality in South Africa based on the evidence collected by the SAPS, the ISS, Stats SA and other organisations. Perceptions are instead influenced by a combination of external and internal influences, resulting in a myriad of perceptions about the same phenomenon. The fear and insecurity that living in the criminalised society provokes can affect people in a number of detrimental ways, including loss of productivity, restriction of social mobility, tensions within interpersonal relationships and straining of financial resources. It is this aspect of the crime wave that could be of most interest to theatre-makers, as it encompasses the individual's perception and experience of life within the criminalised society. The manner of crimes committed and methods used in South Africa are not unique; however, the everyday citizen's experiences of living in a criminalised society are. The performing arts have a unique opportunity to assist victims of crime – or those experiencing life with a constant fear of crime – through dealing with, and potentially healing the wounds of, those experiences. As Anderson and Menon observe: "As scholars in the field of performance studies, we are both uniquely qualified and ethically obligated to explore specific sites of violence as well as larger questions about how violence is specifically performed" (2009: 3).

Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction to South African theatre

In order to understand, analyse and appreciate the works emerging in South African theatre that have engaged with the criminalised nature of South African society, it is critical to gain an understanding of the environment in which they originated. This chapter will outline several features that can be considered unique to the South African theatre industry as a result of its formation and development over more than a century, and its exposure to global trends and developments in theatre practice and theatre study. These features both reflect and refract South Africa's diverse and sometimes contradictory society. There are also several popular theatre-making practices that can be said to be distinctively South African, that warrant discussion.

3.1.1 A brief history of South African theatre

“Perhaps any representation of South African life is burdened by its history” (Corrigall in Flockemann, 2011: 130).

Theatre in ‘post-apartheid’ South Africa has experienced an exciting period of exploration in terms of forms and content. The trends that have emerged over the last two decades reflect a dynamically changing society and how individuals have experienced this transformation. Theatre-makers are themselves citizens and their work is often (directly or indirectly) a commentary on their personal experience of living in a transitioning and ever-changing society.⁴³ As such, they are able to use the medium of theatre as a platform – in a manner similar to the TRC – to tell stories that reflect experiences that may previously have been denied the opportunity to be reflected or expressed theatrically, and to tell these stories to an audience potentially more diverse and integrated than in the apartheid past. In a society that previously sought to separate people and their cultures and ways of life, the staging of these human stories can provide insights into (or even revelations of) the many distinctive experiences of the ever-changing South African society and potentially contribute towards bringing them in closer contact with one another.

⁴³ “In a sociological sense the artist, the medium, the artwork and the receiver of the artwork (e.g. playwright, play, director, performer, performance, and audience in the theatre) may all be said to display aspects of their times and their environment in the work, for they have each been shaped by that particular society, and would thus inevitably introduce aspects of that society (or societies) into a specific presentation” (Hauptfleisch, 1997: 2).

3.1.1.1 Post-anti-apartheid theatre (1994 – 2004)

The 'post-apartheid' period is generally considered to be the first decade of democracy in South Africa and therefore refers either to the period 1994-2004, or 1990-2000. The reason for this discrepancy is that apartheid officially ended in 1990, when CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) began the work of negotiating the transition to a democracy that recognised the rights of all of its citizens; the first democratic elections took place in 1994, which is also the year that Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the first democratically elected President of South Africa and the first non-white President of the Republic. In terms of theatre studies in South Africa, post-apartheid theatre usually refers to the period 1994-2004 (Hauptfleisch, 1997; Kruger, 1999). Kruger uses the term 'post-anti-apartheid theatre' (1999: 191) and Hauptfleisch uses the term 'pre-post-apartheid' (1997: 160) to describe this time period, observing that theatre produced in South Africa during this time period was fundamentally a response to the anti-apartheid/protest theatre of the previous decades, and that South African theatre was yet to establish an identity unrelated to apartheid. However, other fields of enquiry consider 1994-2004 to be more accurately 'post-apartheid'. For the purposes of this study, in response to the observations put forward by Van Heerden (2008: 11 & 18), 'post-anti-apartheid' theatre will be understood to refer to theatre from 1994-2004, although it is also acknowledged that some theatre-makers produced work that could be described as post-anti-apartheid both before 1994 and after 2004. Following the definitions proposed by Kruger (1999) and Hauptfleisch (1997) for 'post-apartheid' theatre, it can be argued that work which emerged around 2004 and work which is created beyond 2014 could be considered 'post-apartheid' (Krueger, 2010: 122). For the purposes of this study, 'post-apartheid' theatre will be understood to be work produced from 2004-2014; it is simultaneously acknowledged that some theatre-makers began producing post-apartheid work well before 2004; and that during this period theatre has emerged which cannot be described as being post-apartheid, but rather identifies with new and emerging South African theatre styles.

Post-anti-apartheid theatre is considered to be the antithesis of theatre produced during the apartheid years, namely the state-funded Eurocentric theatre used to promote the superiority of white English and Afrikaans culture, as well as the 'protest theatre' that opposed such a cultural bias and apartheid in general. Post-anti-apartheid theatre was marked by what some (Krueger, 2008) refer to as 'identity plays', which are described as exploring the various identities of people living within South Africa, their efforts to redefine themselves and their position within the new and unfamiliar democratic society (Kruger, 1999: 191). Where protest theatre looked critically at the apartheid system and state-funded theatre looked elsewhere (to Europe and America) for cultural identity and affiliation, post-anti-apartheid theatre

explored the individual efforts to integrate with other racial groups and adapt to the difficulties of a transitioning society; and post-apartheid theatre mainly looked back and inward (personal introspection) for meaning and understanding. Theatre critics were rather scathing in their reception of post-anti-apartheid theatre, frustrated that it did not have the same political intensity and social relevance of protest theatre and uncertain about how to comment on work that was so personal to the originating artist(s). This criticism was perhaps an unfair critique of theatre-makers' experimentation, as the society that they were working within and attempting to reflect had changed dramatically:

On the one hand, the theatre makers were challenged to deal with a range of difficult issues, some old and some new, but on the other hand they were making theatre for a new audience, in a dramatically transformed society, with new interests and new expectations and also on a playing field where the rules had changed dramatically, virtually overnight (Van Heerden, 2008: 94–95).

In the post-apartheid period it would appear that South African audiences have become more accommodating of this process of introspection and have acknowledged it as essential for many theatre-makers to undergo in order to redefine their message and rediscover their voice (Van Heerden, 2008).

3.1.1.2 Post-apartheid theatre (2004 – 2014)

Despite the demarcated time periods put forward, both post-anti-apartheid and post-apartheid theatre has been produced and staged in South Africa during the last twenty years of democracy. The time periods are useful indicators of when these theatre genres were seen to have emerged and when they were considered most prevalent. 'Post-apartheid' theatre still exhibits certain aspects of 'post-anti-apartheid' theatre, namely the fractured nature of emerging voices and perspectives reflective of a diverse and fracturing society, but can be clearly identified as dealing with social issues facing post-post-apartheid society. This period of South Africa's social transition and reconciliation process still has several issues to deal with relating to the unravelling of two-hundred years of oppression, and the re-integration of previously disparate/divided social and cultural groups.

Obviously the first ten years of democracy was too short a period for any significant measure of cultural integration to take place amongst the widely diverse peoples of South Africa after such an extended period of enforced segregation under the apartheid laws. Most population groups continued to live in the physical areas and communities in which they had been living before 1994, areas determined along strict racial lines under the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950) (Van Heerden, 2008: 219).

In a sense, this period can be seen as the re-evaluation of the ideals of 'the rainbow nation'⁴⁴ and a means of assessing the tangible progress of transforming South African society. Many have realised that the hopes of the post-apartheid era were unrealistic and that several decades of work still need to happen to reach the goals of a free and fair South Africa that serves all its citizens equally.

This new vision is reflected in 'post-apartheid' theatre: it is critical of the shortcomings of our government and simultaneously hopeful for a better future for South Africans. The reflective criticism characteristic of post-anti-apartheid theatre exists alongside an idealism that represents something new. 'Post-apartheid' theatre can be said to be a refocused canon of theatre making which is both self-referential and socially relevant, offering a uniquely personal perspective whilst remaining accessible to all.

3.2 Unique features of South African theatre

3.2.1 'Theatre-makers'

In his dissertation "Theatre in a New Democracy: Some Major Trends in South African Theatre from 1994 to 2003" (2008) Johann Van Heerden discusses the development and use of the term 'theatre-maker' in contemporary South African theatre to indicate authorship of a play. He suggests that the term 'theatre-maker' has come to be more commonly used in South African theatre than 'scriptwriter', 'director', 'dramatist', 'choreographer', or 'designer' since a creator is often responsible for several of these roles simultaneously (Van Heerden, 2008: 92). This seems particularly the case in independent theatre, where the playwright will often also direct, choreograph or design the production. Van Heerden suggests further that another reason for the term's common usage is the prevalence and popularity of 'workshop theatre', particularly during the protest theatre years.⁴⁵ In such theatre, a group of theatre-

⁴⁴ 'The rainbow nation' is a term that was coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe South Africa both in terms of the multicultural and multiracial ideals of the new South Africa and the euphoric hopefulness of the 1990s.

⁴⁵ During this time period (1970s and 1980s) the apartheid laws which were introduced in 1965 prohibited black artists and white artists from collaborating, and forbade work created by black artists from being staged in the state theatres that were designated as being for 'whites only' (Hauptfleisch, 1997: 41). The workshop system allowed artists of different races and nationalities to create work together without being caught, by working under a group name. By leaving their individual

makers devise the story as a collective project, with all members sharing authorship. They typically devise the play by improvising some scenes and then committing them to paper, while writing other scenes in script form either as individuals or as a group. As a result, it is difficult to identify a single playwright or director in the workshop process, as every member of the collective contributes to both aspects in equal measure. It is therefore easier to refer to the entire collective as 'theatre-makers', with the understanding that they are thus all equally responsible for the creation of the play. For the purposes of this study, the word 'theatre-maker' will be used as an umbrella term to refer to: those who can be identified in a clearly-defined role as 'scriptwriter', 'director', 'choreographer' or 'designer' involved in the creation of a particular piece of theatre; as well as those who are responsible for several of these roles at once (Van Heerden, 2008).

3.2.2 Reviewers and bloggers

South Africa has a system of reviewing theatre that is markedly different to those found in other parts of the world, most specifically Europe and the United States of America. In these developed countries,⁴⁶ it is common practice for several trained and recognised theatre critics to view a production⁴⁷ and for their reviews to have a significant influence on subsequent public impressions. The careers of some theatre-makers and performing artists have been dramatically supported, or severely curtailed, based on a good or bad review in this tradition. These critics are typically associated with large, well-recognised newspapers and media houses and are academically trained in the field of theatre studies. In South Africa, however, while many of the newspapers have allotted theatre reviewers, these positions are not always given to journalists with knowledge or experience of the performing arts and, in some cases, limited staffing results in journalists having to review productions in between other, often unrelated, tasks or projects. Furthermore, in the larger cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town there are typically several theatre productions running in several venues at once; and with short production runs preferred by most independent theatre productions, it is not practical, or possible, for reviewers to attend all of these productions. It is also worth noting that some South African newspaper reviews are more aptly described as advertorials rather than criticisms in terms of their content. As a result of the limited capacity of South African theatre reviewers and the sometimes uninformative

names off the credits sheet they managed (mostly) to produce new theatre undetected by the apartheid security police (Van Heerden, 2008: 92).

⁴⁶ The use of the terms 'developed' and 'developing' to describe countries has been explained in section 2.3.1.

⁴⁷ Traditionally, a theatre production is understood to be a scripted drama that is performed in a theatre that has clearly designated spaces for the performers and for the audience. Working in a post-colonial, post-modern setting, it is my understanding that the term 'theatre production' or 'play' can refer to any devised live performance that could include multimedia elements, that could be performed in any space with any performer/audience configuration, that could involve performers using physical expression or vocal expression or a combination of the two to present the story, and that could make use of story-telling elements and techniques from any cultural tradition or a combination of a variety of these.

nature of their reviews, newspaper reviews in South Africa do not seem to typically hold much influence over theatre careers or audience opinions. There are, however, several internet bloggers who have taken it upon themselves to provide reviews for shows that the newspapers might not be able to review. These bloggers have risen in prominence to the point where some of their comments are taken more seriously than those of the newspaper reviewers (who in the Western theatre tradition would be considered to be the 'real' reviewers). It has been mentioned that newspaper theatre critics in South Africa are not necessarily required to have any theatre training or experience to write reviews of theatre productions, whereas most of the bloggers are themselves either performers or theatre-makers and have merely taken up reviewing in their personal capacity.⁴⁸ The bloggers' perspectives are therefore very useful as they often include commentary on aspects of performance and staging from a theatre practitioner's point of view.

Caution needs to be applied when reading blog reviews, however, as these are neither required to have an editor like newspaper articles nor are they required to be fact-checked or peer-reviewed like journal articles. The author's opinions are, therefore, not required to be factual or objective according to any authority or quality-control body. They are, however, an increasingly valuable tool for theatre students to gain insight into productions that they would otherwise not have had an opportunity to access in person, as well as providing the reader with a theatre practitioner's perspective on theatre productions. This insight is crucial in a study such as this one in which the extent of the artist's complicity is being investigated.

3.2.3 The three theatre 'arenas': mainstream/commercial, independent/festival and community theatre

South African theatre can be described as being divided into three distinctive 'arenas'.⁴⁹ These operate very differently and serve the interests of different sorts of theatre artists. They are not, however, separate entities that function independently of one another. Although the entire South African theatre industry is interconnected across cities, styles, genres and themes, theatre-makers typically create a niche for themselves within one of the three arenas of theatre according to their particular interests and abilities.

⁴⁸ Examples include Megan Furniss and Clifford Graham, whose blogs can be found at <http://www.meganshead.co.za/> and <https://mondaymissilereview.wordpress.com/> respectively.

⁴⁹ The term 'arena' suggests a location within which various group activities take place. It was chosen as a way to conceptualise the three different forms of theatre being produced in South Africa, as the commonly accepted practices and formats of these arenas change very little.

Firstly, there is the *commercial theatre* arena, which is based on the Western European and North American model of theatre-making and therefore operates in a very similar way to these theatre industries. This arena is mainly occupied by large-scale musicals (Krueger, 2008), dramas and comedies (Nevitt, 2013). Productions in this arena are typically designed to have mass appeal and commercial success and seldom present works that are abstract or experimental in nature. Productions of classical or traditional works, such as Shakespeare, Chekov and Miller, are typically seen in this arena, as the scale and resources of the theatre spaces in this arena matches that required for the design and staging of these productions. Nevitt refers to these productions as being part of an internationally recognised 'canon' of the Western theatre tradition and identifies them as being those plays which are considered to be important contributors to the development of this form of theatre (2013: 40).

Secondly, there is the *independent theatre* arena (also referred to informally as the 'festival circuit') which is comprised of productions specifically designed to be performed at the various arts festivals nationally and internationally, particularly the fringe festivals.⁵⁰ Productions that can be categorised as independent theatre typically follow the rules of the arts festivals quite strictly regardless of whether they are intended to be staged at an arts festival or not. This consideration is taken so that productions may be ready to travel to arts festivals or venues with minimal preparation time, as well as to keep production costs to a minimum to capitalise on profits from ticket sales. The standard technical prescriptions that many of the fringe festivals have (some of which are more accurately defined as 'recommendations') include: duration of less than one hour; the use of minimal sets and props; small casts; and the use of self-promotion or creative marketing to attract audiences. Independently-produced plays, typically made by emerging artists, are staged in this arena because the low costs involved make it accessible to those who are forced to fund their own art. The arts festival fringe programmes typically run on a very tight schedule in order to accommodate as many productions as possible, and often use converted school and church halls as theatre venues. This places extreme limitations on the kind of staging elements that theatre-makers are able to use as there is limited (or non-existent) backstage space and very little time to set up and strike the set between other productions that share the same venue. Theatre-makers, designers and performers in this arena are usually young and enthusiastic, and willing to experiment and innovate; and this is evident in the work that they produce. The affordability of independent theatre has also opened up the art form to

⁵⁰ A Fringe Festival is considered to be a non-curated festival of experimental and diverse theatre, dance, music, and other performing art forms. The festival is open to anyone who applies and therefore promotes the opportunity for audiences to view work by emerging artists and artists wishing to experiment. The first festival of this kind was the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the formats of fringe festivals internationally have remained virtually unchanged since its inception (Edinburgh Fringe Festival, available at <https://www.edfringe.com/about-us>, accessed 1 October 2015).

previously excluded social groups, granting practitioners and companies' access to new audiences and artistic possibilities. A large percentage of productions created and staged in post-apartheid South Africa have emerged within the independent theatre arena (Kruger, 1999: 195), which seems to have provided a platform for expressing previously untold stories and exposing previously unseen points of view. There are several small, independent theatre spaces in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town that provide a platform for theatre-makers to make independent theatre without having to travel across country to one of the arts festivals. These theatre spaces are sporadically supported and many have had to close their doors over the last twenty years due to a lack of funds. However, because of the demographic that this arena attracts, independent theatre is often the most exciting and unpredictable form of theatre being made in contemporary South Africa.

Finally, there is the *community theatre* arena, which is made up of professional and amateur theatre groups or companies that create theatre dealing with context-specific social issues and perform around the country in various communities. This theatre is typically targeted at underprivileged and previously disadvantaged communities in the townships and rural areas. These plays are typically devised and workshopped productions which contain elements of drama, music and dance (Kruger, 1999: 199; Van Heerden, 2008). Community theatre groups typically perform in community centres and town halls so that audiences from the community can attend theatre close to home. For most members of their target audiences, a trip to a commercial or independent theatre would require a long, sometimes unsafe and expensive trip. Community theatre groups traditionally charge a minimal ticket price in order to provide the local community with easy access to theatre.⁵¹ These groups typically perform in a variety of languages, focussing on the language of the cultural group predominant in their community or the community that they are performing for. Ironically, community theatre is as inaccessible to middle-class or urbanised audiences, as mainstream theatre is to rural and township community members. Middle-class audience members may be reluctant to travel into the lower-income areas where community theatre groups usually perform; and because of the socio-economic legacy of apartheid, the middle class can be considered to be mainly white and the working class as mainly black or coloured.⁵² While the reluctance of township audiences to travel to mainstream theatres is often perceived as understandable (based on economic factors), the reluctance of middle-class audiences to travel to the townships to see community theatre plays is often criticised as being latently racist or

⁵¹ "Any improvement in the financial position of historically disadvantaged individuals, families and communities tended to be invested in the upgrading of basic infrastructure and needs rather than investment in arts, culture and leisure activity" (Van Heerden, 2008: 219).

⁵² The correlation between class and race is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, but research has shown that the racial composition of each class group is largely still divided along apartheid-era lines, despite a significant rise in blacks, coloureds and Indians in the middle class and whites in the working class.

classist, since most middle class individuals/families have access to their own vehicle and could easily make the trip. It has been observed that community theatre is seldom met with the same respect and interest that commercial theatre and independent theatre are based on personal accounts of theatre-makers working in this arena and the availability of reviews in the mainstream media; however, community theatre and mainstream theatre are becoming more and more integrated (as a result of initiatives and partnerships with the government, businesses, established artists and mainstream theatres, also mentioned in section 3.2.5) and this theatre arena can no longer be seen as unrelated to South African theatre studies.

3.2.4 Performance spaces: established theatres vs festivals

In South Africa, there seems to be a scale of prestige associated with the theatre venues that productions are staged in; in other words the larger the theatre, the greater the seating capacity, and the more expensive it is for production companies to hire, the higher interest a venue seems to attract. The largest venues are the former state-theatres: namely, the State Theatre in Pretoria, the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town (formerly called the Nico Malan Theatre) and the Playhouse in Durban. These are followed in prominence by the theatres that have been an established part of the national theatre business for twenty years or more, namely the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg (Hauptfleisch, 1997). These are followed by the various small independent theatres, such as The Windybrow Theatre in Johannesburg, The Catalina Theatre in Durban, and The Alexander Bar Upstairs Theatre in Cape Town. The arts festivals, however, carry a prestige all of their own: considered a more cost-effective and accessible platform for presenting new work, the arts festival circuit also carries prestige for those productions that manage to enjoy a successful run and receive good reviews and/or awards either during, or as a result of, attendance at the festival. Arts festivals are not only generally open to all, but they also offer opportunities for productions and theatre practitioners to gain recognition from their peers and advance their careers. Established artists and emerging artists alike seek success and acknowledgment at the arts festivals, and they are viewed across all aspects of the theatre industry as being valuable networking opportunities. The established theatres in the various metropolises, on the other hand, are only accessible to those few theatre-makers who can secure enough funding for their productions (whether that funding is secured through donations, sponsorship or other means).

For some established theatre-makers, such as Mike Van Graan, the festival circuit is considered a testing ground to 'try-out' new ideas and receive feedback from audiences and reviewers before performing in a 'proper' theatre in the urban centres (Van Graan in Morgan-Hollander, 2008). Established theatre-makers will often draw a high capacity crowd on the festival circuit and thus make a financial success of their productions there. But, despite the high attendance at arts festivals the audience pool at arts festivals is limited; it is mostly middle-class individuals who attend the festivals and having such a small demographic to perform to is frustrating to some veteran theatre-makers who are particularly interested in reaching a wide and diverse audience (Morgan-Hollander, 2008).⁵³

For other theatre-makers, the success of their work at the festivals will influence their ability to secure funding to perform in the big cities at the larger theatres, as well as the independent ones. For emerging theatre-makers it seems fair to assume that any exposure could be considered advantageous, as it raises their profile with audiences and their peers. The decision-making process for selecting a performance venue has many facets to it and may be related to the theatre-maker's profile in the industry, preferred arena of theatre, preferred genre and target audience. For the purposes of this study it needs to be stated that selecting a performance venue is an important aspect of theatre-making, as it affects the theatre-maker's accessibility to, and advancement in, the theatre industry, as well as the potential audiences' physical accessibility to their work (i.e. which social groups get to watch).⁵⁴ It is also important to note that not all theatre-makers are concerned with who does and does not have the opportunity to watch their work; it has been observed that some are satisfied as long as *someone* is watching. However, in the context of a study of South African theatre, these issues are important to take cognisance of as they are related to the process of societal transformation which remains one of the key issues South African's are struggling with.

3.2.5 The limitations of non-English-language theatre

In 2002, Zakes Mda bemoaned the limitations that language placed on the process of transformation to and within South African theatre post-apartheid. "There is an unwritten law that theatre is only theatre if it is in English or at least in Afrikaans" (Mda in Van Heerden, 2008: 221). He made this statement in reference to the works of theatre that were being

⁵³ Attending theatre festivals is an expensive undertaking. Expenses like transport and accommodation are comparable to a local holiday, but added to these are the costs of show tickets and food. Accommodation at festivals is usually basic student hostel facilities, which have no cooking facilities, requiring guests to purchase most of their meals. It follows then, that if a trip to an arts festival costs the same or more than the standard family holiday, then it are only those who can typically afford family holidays who are able to afford the trip; and this is typically middle-class citizens.

⁵⁴ As theatre historian and critic Temple Hauptfleisch observes, "A significant part of the 'message' of a performance is encoded in the choice of a particular medium for and the specific venue in which to present it. In particular by that venue's (consciously created) public image, and the image of those associated with it" (Hauptfleisch, 1997: 111).

produced by black theatre-makers in the mainstream theatre arena at the time. These artists, despite not being first-language English speakers, were mostly choosing to write their stories in English or Afrikaans rather than in their native tongues or in vernacular (which in South Africa is generally taken to mean a combination of English, Afrikaans and one or more of the other indigenous languages). In the ten years following his statement, there has been a concerted effort by various theatre bodies to promote the creation of new theatre in the indigenous languages and to stage community theatre works (which are typically neither in English nor Afrikaans) in traditionally mainstream theatre venues, providing these productions access to new and otherwise unreachable audiences. The Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, for example, has held an annual festival of community theatre since 2011 called the *Zabalaza Theatre Festival* (previously referred to as the *Ikhwezi Theatre Festival*) that actively pursues community theatre productions which make use of indigenous languages, vernacular or multiple official South African languages. As Mda's statement suggests, in a multilingual society such as South Africa where different cultural groups typically have their own language, a lack of diversity in the languages that theatre is being performed in can translate to a lack of societal transformation across all theatre arenas, which would perpetuate the imbalance of perspectives inherited from apartheid that this study suggests contemporary South African theatre should address.⁵⁵ It has been stated in Chapter Two that the multilingual nature of South African society means that content in some languages are inaccessible to people who speak a different language and that communication is therefore often reduced to being English and to being as rudimentary as possible to avoid having to translate every idea into each of the eleven languages. As such, aside from the classifications outlined by the theatre arenas, an alternative distinction can therefore be made between audiences who prefer to watch plays in English and audiences who prefer plays presented in one or more of the indigenous languages, and between the theatre-makers who prefer to produce work in English and those who prefer to work in the indigenous languages. It also cannot be stated that South African theatre is reflective of South African society as long as there is unequal representation of the eleven official languages spoken in the country.

⁵⁵ The viewpoint that South African theatre practitioners are responsible (by way of their complicity in the way their work is presented and the potential effects that this presentation could have on different audience members) for transforming the South African theatre arenas by presenting those previously marginalised experiences of South African society has been discussed in Chapter One in reference to theorists like Blumberg (2009) and Flockemann (2011). Chapter One also makes reference to the work of the TRC that demonstrated that the previously marginalised experiences often manifest in the form of traumatic perspectives that are difficult to articulate or express or what Flockemann describes as the 'unspeakable' that contemporary South African theatre needs to attempt to articulate.

3.3 Representation, resources, access and agendas

In a transitioning society such as South Africa access to resources and opportunities are critically important to a variety of sectors and the transformation of the South African theatre landscape into one that is more representative of the diversity in our society and more inclusive across the three arenas is arguably one of the most important chapters in recent theatre history and discourse. Chapter Two emphasized the wide variety of experiences of, and responses to, living in the criminalised society in South Africa. It is the intention of this study to present theatrical representations of as many of these experiences and responses as possible, which requires analysis of plays staged by theatre-makers from different socio-economic, gender and racial backgrounds. As has been discussed in section 3.2.2, the apartheid government determined who received funding and who did not; who was allowed to attend which theatre; who was allowed to perform for which audience; who was allowed to publish scripts and who was not. They did this in accordance with their policy of racial segregation which favoured white South Africans over non-white South Africans. Under the guise of 'separate development', whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians were discouraged from working together or crossing the strict boundaries of racial segregation that were exercised in theatre venues and other public spaces. Those who were not white were not given the same access to funds, venues and training as their white counterparts and were often banned or arrested for producing work critical of the government (Kruger, 1999). In post-apartheid South Africa, the obstacles to the staging of work by black, coloured and Indian theatre-makers went from being institutional to being economic.⁵⁶ Hauptfleisch suggests that, despite the desires expressed by some (Krueger 2008c, p.15; Steadman in Hauptfleisch 1997) to move away from racial classifications in contemporary South Africa, South African researchers will still need to use the terms 'white', 'black', 'coloured' and 'Indian' in order to track the progress of the efforts in the South African theatre industry to be more inclusive and to stage representations more reflective of the diversity in society (1997: 6).

3.3.1 Representations – stereotypes

Theatre has the ability to reflect reality, although there is much debate amongst theatre-makers, theatre critics, and theatre scholars about how important the accuracy of this reflection is. It has also been discussed in Chapter One that one of the most contentious aspects of staging violence or violent and abusive acts for entertainment is the impact that

⁵⁶ How the class divide still echoes the race/class divide set up by apartheid is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two and mentioned earlier in this chapter. The systematic discrimination of some racial groups and promotion of others created a dramatic difference in access to resources; the legacy of which still means that some race groups are more represented in the theatre being staged in South Africa than others.

these acts of representation may have on audience members, even in cases where the 'authenticity' of the representation does not necessarily relate directly to an audiences' reactions to it.

Theatre, whether it directly represents real-world examples or employs fiction and fantasy to explore violent possibilities, provides us with space, focus and stimuli for a concentrated consideration of the subject (Nevitt, 2013: 9).

As mentioned in Chapter One, several theorists (Anderson & Menon, 2009; Blumberg, 2009; Flockemann, 2011; Nevitt, 2013) suggest that the artists involved in producing the plays that attempt to discuss/represent subjects such as violent crime have a responsibility to carefully consider the impacts that these representations could have as part of their theatre practice. They contend that the theatre-makers have an undeniable complicity in the messages that the audience receives from watching their staged performances. Media framing theory suggests that how authors choose to portray or represent issues, in conjunction with the environment that the audience members are in and the character of the individual viewers, determines how the audience will feel about these issues. Theatre can influence the public's opinions on certain issues according to the way in which these issues are depicted, as I witnessed with the examples of the student watching *6 Mins* and the woman watching *Pocket Shots* mentioned in Chapter One.

The point is that the playwright, in the process of creating his language, selects what one might term identifiable markers taken from the particular variant, and then welds them onto the standard language he might be using. In comedy such markers are very noticeable because they are intended to be. Problems may arise, however, when the selections made by a particular playwright under particular circumstances are seen as a true reflection of the original variant. [...] Very often such fabricated forms thus become the norm for stage usage, and may obscure the real characteristics of the genuine article (Hauptfleisch, 1997: 91).

3.3.2 Representations – myths/untrue facts

While it is the theatre-maker's prerogative to frame the issue of living in the criminalised society however they would like, and it is contested that the accuracy of a re-enactment of a staged violent act has anything to do with the potential re-victimisation of audience members or performers, the problem with misrepresenting the true nature of criminal activity and the risk of potential victimisation is that it perpetuates misinformation. The true extent of the crime problem in South Africa is so widely misunderstood that the efforts to address this

criminality in society are constantly being hampered by misrepresentations of the problem. The 'Huntley thesis' case (discussed in Chapter Two) is a prime example of this phenomenon; the growing number of white middle-class South Africans feeling like they are unduly targeted by criminals and are disproportionately at risk of victimisation could result in a misappropriation of crime prevention resources that would better serve the poor, who have a much higher risk of victimisation (Silber & Geffen, 2009). Some white Afrikaner celebrities, such as pop-singer Steve Hofmeyr, have popularised this cause and coined such inflammatory terms as 'white genocide' to describe this perceived phenomenon (De Wet, 2013; Pillay, 2013). It is therefore particularly treacherous for theatre-makers and those in the media to represent violence and the criminalised society without careful consideration of the effects that they want their representations to have, and whether they want to perpetuate these radical ideas or moderate their representation of this phenomenon.

3.3.3 Representations – the potential traumatic effect on audiences and performers

Interpersonal crimes are highly traumatic events, both for those who have fallen victim to them and for those who are personally related to a victim of an interpersonal crime. In contemporary South Africa, the high level of interpersonal crime means that most people have at this point either fallen victim to an interpersonal crime or are intimately familiar with someone who has. As a result, theatre-makers need to be cautious about how they are staging interpersonal criminal acts.

Of course, plays can reference interpersonal crime without staging the criminal act and often do, as it is technically difficult to stage violence between actors. Cusack in her introduction note to Nevitt's *Theatre and Violence* states, "I think it's almost impossible to pull off a convincing act of violence (or sex for that matter) onstage. I have seen/learned carefully choreographed fights, and that's exactly how they end up looking. And suspension of disbelief just doesn't stretch to accepting that an actor is really hurting his colleague" (2013: ix). Theatre-makers typically make use of a fight choreographer for the purpose of staging any form of interpersonal violence, but it is still very difficult to stage violence that looks authentic without injuring the actors performing it. Nevitt uses the example of staging rape to support this assertion, stating that, it is difficult to simulate a sexual assault without the actor playing the role of the victim feeling degraded or violated in some way (2013: 33).

The spectators are not encountering 'rape' as an abstract concept; they are witnessing two actual bodies in that specific relationship of powerful sexual aggressor and powerless victim. The knowledge that the bodies belong to performers and that there is no actual rape taking place may make it possible to continue watching, but the embodiment of the idea 'rape' does make a difference to the way that it is understood (Nevitt, 2013: 33).

It is a humiliating and hurtful experience and cannot be perceived as an acting task devoid of emotional risk to the performer. Particularly, as stated above, if the performer themselves has been the victim of a sexual assault. The initial meeting at an audition and the early stages of the rehearsal process seldom allow the space for theatre-makers and their cast to discuss such personally traumatic experiences as sexual or physical assault.

Referring back to how problematic misrepresentations can be, Nevitt further states:

Much performed violence deliberately provokes a confusion of responses in its audience. When we analyse violence in plays and performances, it is important not to overlook the complexities of intention and reception. Every moment in a performance is made up of a series of precise choices with far-reaching implications. [...] It is also helpful to recognise the importance of theatrical convention to the process of communicating ideas in performance (Nevitt, 2013: 16).

Either way, theatre-makers should be accountable for the choices that they make in terms of how they represent traumatic experiences such as violent interpersonal crimes, as well as becoming more cognisant of why they make these choices.

Chapter 4

4.1 Characterising the various methods for staging the criminalised society

In “Facing the Stranger in the Mirror”, Flockemann proposes that theatre-makers are aware that “the fictional and performative mode allows scope for addressing and speaking to, or for, those whose voices and experiences are not made public in other discourses” (2011: 132). As discussed in Chapter One, this can be applied to representations of South African’s experiences of living in fear of potential victimisation in a criminalised society. The focus of this study is on how theatre-makers are staging violent crime, as well as other aspects of the criminalised society, with an acknowledgement - inspired by Flockemann’s statement - that theatre-makers have a responsibility to engage with traumatic social phenomena such as violence or crime in a considerate manner. Nevitt supports this by stating:

When we analyse performed representations of violence, or make choices about how to stage violence in our own performances, it is important to consider the ways in which the portrayal connects with existing ideological questions. It is also important to recognise instances of canonical or historical status potentially obscuring the importance of what that act of showing does (Nevitt, 2013: 48–49).

In the context of South Africa (which is, as Chapter Two has identified and discussed, an historically inequitable and divided society), the manner in which theatre scholars and theatre-makers present and discuss instances of violent crime and the experiences of fear associated with living in the criminalised society is of critical importance. This is particularly true in the light of ‘the Huntley thesis’ (discussed in Chapters Two and Three) and other similar highly-publicised cases promoting false victimhood and perpetuating prejudicial narratives inherited from apartheid. Theatre-makers have the ability to promote or disrupt hegemonic belief-systems about what the criminalised society is, how it operates and what an individual’s potential risk of victimisation is. Another implication of the above statement is that theatre-makers and theatre scholars need to be sensitive about how audiences are experiencing our framing of violent crime and fear of crime. There are two aspects to this implication that need to be taken into consideration: firstly, as highlighted in Chapter One, is the potential re-traumatisation/re-victimisation of members of the audience by viewing certain stagings of violent crime or fear of crime; and secondly, the implied disjuncture between the intended impressions/‘messages’ of the play and the audience’s perception of

these ‘messages’ caused by elements of “canonical or historical status” (2013: 49). Inherent to Nevitt’s statement are two facets of representing violent crime that need to be considered: how the violent crime is *discussed*; and how the violent crime is *shown*. These can also be understood as the ‘abstract’ (*discussed*) and the ‘visual’ (*shown*) facets of interactions with violent crime. Anderson and Menon describe these aspects as *spectacular* and *embodied*: “enactments of violence are both *spectacular* in their cultural impact and *embodied* in their transaction and effect. [...] violence has become foundational to contemporary visual culture and thus has acquired, at breakneck pace, a profound power to command attention” (Anderson & Menon, 2009: 4). This is not to say that violent acts are only interesting in terms of staging if they are shown, but rather that contemporary theatre operates within a visual culture in which audiences are accustomed to interpreting information directly and explicitly.

Marvin Carlson, in his book *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory Machine* (2003), discusses the audience’s need to see and hear – and the theatre-maker’s intention to show and produce – images and sounds that remind them of other experiences. “The conditions of the theatrical event, enacted not only in a brief period of time but before a mass audience, provide none of the opportunity for reflection or even rereading offered by novels or lyric poetry and thus encourage the use of material already somehow familiar to an audience for ease in reception” (Carlson, 2003: 23). Carlson’s statements can be used to elaborate on those made by Anderson and Menon, by providing a rationale for why audiences might be attracted primarily or predominantly to visual representation. Carlson elaborates on this notion that within their cultural frames of reference, human beings have created, and continue to create, sets of patterns of information that they can recall/remember in order to relate that information back to whatever they are encountering. In theatrical terms, this refers to conventions, signs, codes and traditions of theatre and drama that are referenced, in both original productions and reproductions, as a sort of shorthand for communicating ideas; that is, for ease of reception. This can also refer to patterns of knowledge gleaned from the media or society in general; people may be able to understand references in plays to highly-publicised crimes without the play needing to demonstrate or discuss any of the details of the crime.⁵⁷ According to the research aims of this study, success in the endeavour of staging aspects of the criminalised society is measured by the public/media reception of the play, thereby making ‘ease in reception’ a potentially important consideration.

⁵⁷ An example of this shorthand - or ‘ease in reception’ - can be found in *The Three Little Pigs* (2012); without directly mentioning disgraced National Prosecuting Authority Head Vusi Pikoli, or mentioning his claim to infamy, in the script, it seemed as though audience members who had been following the case in the news immediately associate the information they had gleaned with the fictional situation unfolding on stage in which the characters mention ‘The National Poultry Authority’.

However, 'ease of reception' is also influenced by what Anderson and Menon referred to as the 'embodied' which refers to the visceral patterns of recognition that audiences can have when watching a play. As discussed in Chapter One, individuals recall their personal physical encounters with violence and use their recollection of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual trauma of their encounter in order to interpret representations of violence presented to them. Flockemann introduces the terms 'thick', 'reflective', and 'hard' as adjectives that describe the ways in which complicity can be staged (2011: 129). 'Thick' describes theatre that is richly and densely layered; 'reflective' describes theatre that reflects upon and reveals; and 'hard' describes theatre that is direct and uncompromising (Flockemann, 2011: 129). Following her methodology of identifying and classifying common performance elements prevalent in the staging of complicity, I similarly used the interdisciplinary research I had conducted to identify and classify those performance elements that were shared by the eleven plays selected for this study.

My immersive investigation of how the criminalised society is understood from the perspective of sociologists and criminologists⁵⁸ revealed the fact that there are many different ways of defining and understanding experiences of living in the criminalised society. It was evident from this research that scholars and practitioners from different fields and different nationalities all have their own terminology (or interpretation of existing terminology) with which to describe these experiences. The diverse nature of this available terminology from various fields of enquiry outside of theatre studies has created the need for a uniform system of analysis with distinct and consistent terminology. As such, I had to draw some conclusions from my immersive research and make certain decisions about which aspects I would focus on when comparing the plays and when analysing their handling of the subject. I have chosen to take certain ideas as credible assumptions and to refer to the criminalised society in terms of my understanding of it based on research in order to progress to the phase of applying this understanding to the interpretation of the same phenomenon by South African theatre practitioners. In order to relate the social phenomenon of the criminalised society to South African theatre's attempts to stage this phenomenon, I had to seek out the human experiences and the stories reflecting these experiences that existed behind the analytical research.

I have analysed (or categorised) the eleven plays from three different perspectives. The first relates to the type of crime being staged and whether or not the criminal act is directly enacted on stage.⁵⁹ The second relates to the ways in which an individual may be exposed to a criminal act; in particular whether their experience of the fictional crime is direct or

⁵⁸ This investigation is discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.2.

⁵⁹ The selection process of the eleven plays is discussed in section 1.7.2.

indirect, and how the theatre-makers have chosen to stage this exposure. As discussed in Chapter Two, fear of crime is not always related to actual victimisation, but could be the result of a 'primary', 'secondary', or 'tertiary' interaction with the criminalised society. These three kinds of exposure are therefore discussed simultaneously because they are all interdependent and affect an individual's feelings and behaviour differently. The third perspective offered relates to the staging of the emotional and behavioural responses that individuals can have to their potential victimisation in a criminalised society. Finally, I will analyse the productions in terms of their impact on audiences and/or the societal discourse they elicited about issues relating to living in the criminalised society.

4.2 Introduction to the plays in chronological order

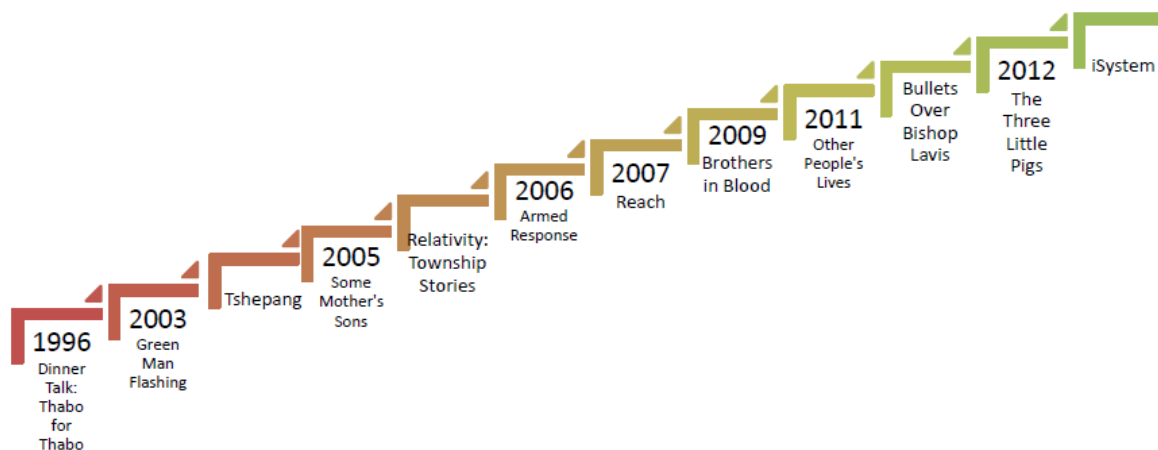


Figure 2: A chronological representation of the plays selected for this study

The plays have been arranged in chronological order of their year of first appearance/production because it was assumed that the way in which theatre practitioners were discussing ideas about the criminalised society would mirror the evolution of this societal problem in South Africa. Categorising or visually signifying the plays sequentially in this way demonstrates the evolution of artistic engagement, thus offering insights into the evolution of actual public sentiments around this issue.

4.2.1 *Dinner Talk* – Mike Van Graan

Mike Van Graan's *Dinner Talk*, is a triptych. It premiered at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in July 1996. The three 'playlets' in the triptych are *Happily Ever After*, *Sisters* and *Thabo for Thabo*. These playlets shared the same actors and each of the two-handers reflected some aspect of life in post-apartheid South Africa which might be discussed around the dinner table. This study is primarily concerned with the playlet *Thabo for Thabo* as it deals with the theme of violent crime in South Africa. There are two characters, Vusi and Steve, and two incidents of violence that are discussed in a South African prison setting. The first incident takes place twelve years prior, at the height of the apartheid regime, when Steve arrives to get Vusi out of prison where he is being brutally tortured. The second incident takes place in post-apartheid South Africa and this time Vusi has been called to get Steve out of prison. Steve has 'snapped' and retaliated violently against the criminal who victimised him.

The production had three runs - all of which were directed by Jay Pather - and three different casts. Ashley Dowds played Steve in 1996 and 1997; Vusi was played by Bheki Mkhwane in 1996, Mzwandile Kamang in 1997 and Lindelani Buthelezi in 1998. It won the Fleur du Cap for Best New Script in 1998; and after pressure from the actors (Van Graan, 2006), Van Graan developed *Thabo for Thabo* into a full-length script in 1999 titled *Some Mother's Sons*. While *Thabo for Thabo* falls outside of the timeframe of this study, it deserves attention because it is the original version of *Some Mother's Sons* which does fall within the scope of this study. I have only read *Dinner Talk*.

4.2.2 *Green Man Flashing* – Mike Van Graan

Green Man Flashing was also written by Mike Van Graan and premiered at the Performing Arts Network of South Africa/ University of Cape Town (PANSA/ UCT) Festival of Reading of New Writing in 2003 where it was directed by Liz Mills. Claire Berelein, Tshamano Sebe, Terry Norton, Itumeleng wa-Lehulere and Ivan Abrahams read the roles. The play was staged the next year in 2004 at the National Arts Festival (Grahamstown), the Hilton Arts Festival (Midlands, Kwazulu-Natal) and the Market Theatre (Johannesburg) with Claire Stopford taking over the directing duties and Jennifer Steyn, Vusi Kunene, Charlotte Butler, Sechaba Morojele and André Samuels playing the roles. It was performed twice again in 2005 with two different casts. At the Market Theatre Michelle Douglas, James Ngobo, Charlotte Butler, Sechaba Morojele and André Samuels performed and at the Baxter Theatre Jennifer Steyn, Tshamano Sebe, Roberta Fox, Chris Gxalaba and André Samuels performed. In 2005 it also travelled to the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State

(PACOFs) in Bloemfontein and the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) in Oudtshoorn. *Green Man Flashing* can be considered a classic Mike Van Graan political thriller⁶⁰ about the value of an individual's human rights in the face of what is best for the greater good of transformation in a traumatised nation. Anton Krueger describes it as being "contemptuous of attempts by the ANC government to protect its cadres from scandal and reflects on the way in which a government can resort to corruption when self-important, high-minded ideals are placed above transparency and accountability" (2010: 95–96). The play revolves around the courtroom drama that unfolds after apartheid struggle veteran Luthando Nyaka is shot and killed in Gabby Anderson's home. At the centre of the controversial case are Gabby and her ex-husband Aaron Matshoba, expatriates who have returned to South Africa after aiding the anti-apartheid struggle from overseas. Gabby, a white forty-three year old, is the secretary of a prominent politician and Aaron, a black forty-five year old, covers up the ruling party's scandals. The couple is estranged after their young son Matthew dies in an aggravated robbery. Their worlds are reconnected when Gabby is raped by her boss and Aaron is called in by the party to buy her silence. The courtroom aspect of the play is told mainly through Gabby's friend and lawyer Anna Richards who is critical of the loyalty that Aaron is asking of Gabby which completely ignores her victimisation. Tensions rise in the flashback action of the play as Anna tries to convince Gabby to pursue criminal charges against her boss and Luthando Nyaka, a party hardliner who has accompanied Aaron, tries to intimidate Gabby into signing the agreement, insisting that Gabby is being selfish by wanting justice at the expense of a leading politician.

LUTHANDO: I don't think I'll ever understand women. But I know that I'll never understand white people. We're offering you a deal for the sake of the country. And all you want is your white justice (Van Graan, 2010: 22).

Green Man Flashing reappeared in 2012 at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and Artscape in Cape Town. Artscape produced this run of the play and Hennie van Greunen directed. Greg Kavellas designed the set, lighting and film effects, and Anthea Thompson, Susan Danford, Thami Mbongo, Charlton George and Wiseman Sithole starred. The play won the Jury Award at the PANSAT/UCT Drama Department Festival of Readings of New Writing in 2003 and was nominated for a Naledi Theatre Award and Fleur du Cap Theatre Award for Best New Script. I have read the script of *Green Man Flashing* and viewed the production in 2012 in Grahamstown at the National Arts Festival.

⁶⁰ Playwright Mike Van Graan is primarily concerned with writing theatre that tackles societal issues related to political issues. He is known for writing political thrillers with a distinctive style that employs cinematic techniques such as flashbacks and cut-away scenes, and multiple monologues being performed at the same time, interrupting one another.

Green Man Flashing was well received by audiences (Louw, 2012) and heralded as an insightful critique of crime, politics and justice in post-apartheid South Africa. It was considered to be a remarkable fit of coincidence when, a year after the play was first staged, the politician that Gabby's boss is based on, then Deputy President Jacob Zuma, was embroiled in a highly publicised legal scandal after being accused of rape. Remarking on the 2012 production of *Green Man Flashing* at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, Cue reviewer Raymond Louw reflects on how the plays message has shifted and how relevant this message is ten years after it was first staged.

Harold Wilson once said that a week is a long time in politics. The almost 10 years since Van Graan penned this riveting play represent a lifetime. And it means that we have had more time to correlate the plots and sub-plots to real life, as a ruling party once again contemplates elections. [...] In the intervening period, the connection between this play and our politics has become even more acute (Louw, 2012).

4.2.3 *Tshepang* – Lara Foot Newton

Tshepang, written and directed by Lara Foot Newton, premiered in 2003. Gerhard Marx designed the production and Mcedisi Shabangu and Kholeka Qwabe performed. The play opened in Grahamstown at the National Arts Festival before touring the United Kingdom. *Tshepang* is a dramatization of the shocking story of the rape of nine month old baby girl, Tshepang, in Louisvaleweg, in the Northern Cape in 2001. In this version of the story, Baby Tshepang (called Siesie at first) is neglected by her alcoholic mother and left vulnerable to be abused by a known acquaintance in a town characterised by neglect and poverty. The character Simon narrates the story while Ruth, the baby's mother, wanders through the set like a haunted figure, silently fiddling with a small cot or rubbing salt into animal skins. *Tshepang* paints a bleak and uncompromising picture of the kind of extreme poverty and structural neglect which created the environment where such a crime could occur. It is not simply a play about the rape of a baby; it is also a play about the social degradation of the places where this brutality tends to occur. The renowned stage design⁶¹ of Gerhard Marx highlights the endless cycle of poverty and desperation that characterised the town-that-could-have-been-any-town. In 2008 it was translated into isiZulu by Bheki Mkhwane and staged in KwaMashu and at the Playhouse Loft Theatre in Durban. The original English version enjoyed another run in 2009, first being staged at the Baxter Theatre, then the Market Theatre, and finally touring in Europe. Once again, Lara Foot Newton directed and Gerhard Marx designed. Mcedisi Shabangu reprised his role as Simon and Nonceba

⁶¹ European reviewers used the term 'scenography'.

Constance Didi took the role of Ruth. I have read this script, but have not watched a staging of this play.

4.2.4 *Some Mother's Sons* – Mike Van Graan

Some Mother's Sons premiered at the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF)/PANSA Festival of Reading of New Writing in November 2005. Here it won the Jury Runner Up prize, the Audience award and the Best Director award for Jerry Mofokeng. After this festival, the play was selected to perform at the KKNK in Oudtshoorn in 2006. At this point the decision was made to change the character Steve to Braam to appeal to the mostly Afrikaans-speaking audience expected at the festival (Van Graan, 2006). Once again, Jay Pather directed. After the KKNK it travelled to the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and the Oval House Theatre in London where Vusi was played by Dumisani Mbebe and Braam was played by Gideon van Eeden. The decision was then taken, after a performance at the De Appel Theatre Festival in The Hague in 2006, to pen a new version of the production in order to include a more filmic structure. This version premiered at the National Arts Festival that same year and travelled to several theatres and arts festivals in this format for the rest of that year. In 2007 van Eeden reprised his role and Wiseman Sithole took the role of Vusi for one more run of the play. The plot is very similar to *Thabo for Thabo* except that there are longer sections of the present and past interactions between the two men. There is more detail about Vusi's role in the struggle against apartheid and how he came to be imprisoned. His anger and fear are explored in greater detail and the development of his friendship with Braam in that prison interview room is also elaborated on. The present-day prison interview is mostly the same as in *Thabo for Thabo*, but Braam elaborates more on how his fear of crime eroded his human rights beliefs, leading him to buy a gun and kill his wife's murderers, and how these actions ceased to appear cruel or gratuitous to him.

BRAAM: You remember the first time they broke into our house? Renée and I laughed it off as our contribution to contemporary dinner talk. You know ... all dinner conversations start with, 'What will you have to drink?' followed by the latest domestic crime stories.

VUSI: The next time it happened, you took the insurance money and went to Bali.

BRAAM: Exactly. But the third time ... when they broke in while we were asleep, and this after we had put up high walls and everything, that really got to us. We were scared, Vusi. Really scared. We sold at a great loss, and moved into a safer neighbourhood. And that's when I bought the gun. When Renée fell pregnant she wanted us to move to Cape Town. We thought it would be safe ... she wanted to be closer to her family. But, I couldn't go. You know ... the firm was doing well, we were expanding ... (Van Graan, 2009: 74–75)

Braam and his wife have a very light initial reaction to being the victims of numerous burglaries. However, their reactions become increasingly extreme as their victimisation is repeated and they begin to consider moving cities and Braam (who until then was a pacifist who did not like weapons) purchased a firearm. I have read *Some Mother's Sons*, but have not seen a staging of this play.

Some Mother's Sons appears to have received predominantly favourable responses, perhaps largely in part because of Van Graan's writing and the subject matter it addresses. The impression provided by Brent Meersman is that,

[a]lthough strong on theme, when compared to Mike Van Graan's other works, it lacks the dramatic bite of *Green Man Flashing* or the riskiness of *Hostile Takeover*. The problem is its all too perfect symmetry – two equal halves, two equally matched characters. This encourages a soft spot in Van Graan's theatre as dialectic. At times, it feels like a debate with dramatic trimming – even though it is complex, layered and the situations themselves are riveting (2006).

Reviewers had little to say about the performances or the design of the play, and as I did not view it, I do not have much more of an impression about the play to offer. Meersman describes the audience response to the play as being divided: “Some Mother's Sons is seen as a closet pro-death penalty piece or as unambiguously probing from the opposite premise” (2006). Van Graan stated in an interview (Morgan-Hollander, 2008) that *Some Mother's Sons* was adapted into a film for the television channel M-Net, which may be an indication that the play was well-received by audiences and had a notable impact on public discourse around the criminalised nature of society.

4.2.5 Relativity: Township Stories – Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom and Presley Chweneyagae

Written and directed by the so-called ‘township Tarantino’ (Peimer, 2009) duo Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom and Presley Chweneyagae, *Relativity: Township Stories* first premiered in South Africa at the National Arts Festival in 2005 before touring the United Kingdom in the same year. In 2006, Grootboom won a Naledi Theatre Award for Best Director for *Relativity: Township Stories* while it continued to play at various venues (de Swardt, 2006). In 2011, Tsepo Wa Mamatu directed a group of students from the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in a production of *Relativity: Township Stories* that played at the WITS Theatre in Johannesburg, the National Arts Festival and the Setk'ani/Encounter Festival in the Czech Republic (Meda, 2012). An uncompromising look at the harsh realities of living with the high levels of violent crime in South African townships, *Relativity: Township Stories* is a three

hour long marathon of gratuitous violence and loud music (de Swardt, 2006; Bayne, 2011; Mbatha, 2011). Grootboom and Chweneyagae successfully channelled the style of Hollywood film director, Quentin Tarantino, in their portrayal of a township being stalked by a sexually perverse serial killer. The play follows the experiences of several township residents whose lives intersect around this criminal and his actions. It shows how violence breeds violence and depicts a world where morality is a luxury. *Relativity: Township Stories* follows four sets of characters as their lives are interrupted by the serial murders. Firstly, there are the police detectives: Bongi, Molomo, Rocks and the medical examiner on the case, Ranko. They investigate the trail of bodies left behind by the serial killer throughout the play and their personal relationships overlap with many of the other characters in the play that are involved in criminal or abusive activities. Secondly, there is father and son duo Detective Rocks and Thabo. Thabo is a young man living in the township who has had to suffer the loss of his mother and the subsequent sexual abuse by his father. As a result, he begins to develop sadistic attitudes about sex, and towards women. While his father tries to solve the serial cases of raping and murdering of young women in the township, mild-mannered Thabo roams the township looking for victims to manipulate and assault. Thirdly, there is Matlakala, as well as her family and her boyfriend. Matlakala is a young woman living in the township who runs away from her turbulent home life to live with her boyfriend. He is a local gangster and once she becomes dependant on him, he begins to treat her like his sexual property. She later falls pregnant and after her behaviour displeases him, he punishes her with a beating. Fourthly, there is Mamiki, the local tavern owner and her daughter Thuli. The soft-spoken Thabo frequents their tavern to sit and read which attracts both women's interest. In order to pursue his desires for Thuli, Thabo seduces her mother, allowing him greater access to their home. Child abuse, rape, murder, police brutality and torture are all featured in this tangled story of average township dwellers trying to survive a deadly attack on their community. I have not been able to watch a staging of this play, but I have read the script.

Relativity: Township Stories is described as a gritty and uncompromising look at the criminalised nature of life in the township; this is due in part to the inclusion of multiple simulated criminal acts to convey the level of personal danger individuals living in the townships are faced with every day. It is the sheer brutality and casualness of the violence depicted in this production that has shocked audiences (Bayne, 2011); however, this aspect of criminality in the township is precisely what the theatre-makers set out to give the audience a sense of. As such, the production is viewed by some to be a successful use of simulated criminal behaviour and violence to depict a particularly cruel and unforgiving environment within South Africa society. However, as a quote by Bayne reveals, there were

discrepancies in the use of this device between the original 2006 production directed by Grootboom and the 2011 student production directed by Wa Mamatu. “As a writer and director Grootboom is well known for using this device to hard hitting effect. But it is a very fine line to walk between harsh, gory reality and gratuitous banality. Too much and it becomes self-indulgent and you desensitise your audience to the play and to the point” (Bayne, 2011). Reviews of the 2006 production suggest that the displays of violent re-enactments were harsh and difficult to watch,⁶² but not excessive, as Bayne and others suggest about the portrayals of violence in the 2011 production.

Besides the two most significant criminal acts, there are also several other beatings, abuses, thefts, and additional crimes which are depicted as the story follows several characters along several story arches. While the inclusion of these performed actions have contributed to the efficacy of efforts to convey the difficulties of life in the township, the inclusion of these numerous enactments is also what makes the production between three and four hours long; an element of the productions that several reviewers complained about (de Swardt, 2006; Bayne, 2011). The original production directed by Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom was four hours long with an interval and the 2011 WITS student production directed by Tsepo Wa Mamatu was cut to two and a half hours without an interval (Moncho, 2011). While the inclusion of numerous portrayals of physical violence may prove effective in portraying the brutal aspect of life in the townships, this could also be seen as an over-representation of criminality that, while beneficial to the overall story, is not appreciated by audiences who have become physically uncomfortable while watching a production. Annette Bayne of *The Citizen* describes this frustration while viewing the 2011 student production: “[M]uch of the impetus and drive of those opening moments dwindled as the show got longer and longer and then even longer. What promised to be a two-and-half-hour show, had its audiences leaving an hour later” (2011). The multiple storylines are useful for showing a range of experiences of the criminalised society within one environment, but as Bayne discovered with the 2011 production, it can become confusing when there are also multiple staging techniques being used. “There are some deeply poignant moments in this play, but they become so cluttered that you miss them, particularly the ending” (Bayne, 2011).

Moir de Swart describes the set design of the 2006 productions as, “[featuring] some exciting stagecraft, including clever lighting, fluid sets, energetic physical performances and superb acting” (2006) and Bayne describes the design of the 2011 production as comprising “a large, cumbersome, multi- layered set” (Bayne, 2011). The production features multiple

⁶² “Every sexual encounter, violent act, argument or drunken rambling is drawn out to its maximum. [...] Witnessing a rape scene on stage is deeply upsetting, sex – from foreplay to climax – is uncomfortable to see” (Bayne, 2011).

set changes, some of which are described as forming part of the action as visual representations of places, objects and themes. The above-mentioned quotations suggest that if this design is successfully interpreted it can enhance the tone of the play, but if it is unsuccessfully interpreted it can distract from the play's message and the actors' performances.

The overall impression provided by the various reviews and interviews read is that *Relativity: Township Stories* is a gritty and well-written piece of contemporary theatre that accurately reflects the dangerous conditions experienced by those living in the townships. It is also evident that audiences found it shocking and in some cases disturbing, which is in line with the theatre-makers' intentions to disrupt assumptions and present an uncompromising depiction of the sheer scale of violence and criminality in the townships. Several reviewers also expressed the view that *Relativity: Township Stories* is an important piece of theatre for contemporary audiences to see. However, de Swart cites the prominent use of Sesotho and vernacular as a potential restriction to the accessibility of the production (2006).

4.2.6 Armed Response – David Peimer and Martina Griller

Armed Response, written by David Peimer and Martina Griller (and developed in part with German playwright Lutz Hübner), premiered in 2006 at the WITS Downstairs Theatre and was commissioned by the Goethe-Institut and the Open Society Foundation for South Africa as part of the launch of the Armed Response Project. This project was designed to analyse the remarkable growth in the privatisation of security in South Africa from a variety of perspectives and using a variety of media (Pisanti, 2006).

David Peimer directed the production and Tsehpo Wa Mamatu, Tarryn Lee, Jerry Mntonga, Lunga Radebe, Lali Dangazele, Martina Griller, Lebo Motaung, Brian Webber and Raymond Ngomane starred. The music was created by Xoli Norman and the video elements were created by Cori Labuschagne. Stage and costume were designed by Sasha Ehlers, Cheryl Brown and Ruth Richard and lighting was designed by Royden Paynter. *Armed Response* revolves around a private security firm of the same name, operating in a Johannesburg neighbourhood. The firm has the monopoly on serving the homes in the area with alarm systems and security guards and it occasionally commits house burglaries to scare its customers into purchasing more advanced (and more expensive) security measures. Their operations are interrupted when a German photographer, Anna, arrives in the area and refuses to purchase their private security. Unlike her neighbours, Anna does not suffer from the fear that comes with living in a criminalised society and fails to understand their hyper-insecurity. After being attacked several times by employees of Armed Response, Anna

becomes even more paranoid than her neighbours and fortifies herself inside her home. As far as could be ascertained, *Armed Response* was only produced and performed once before being published in David Peimer's play anthology named *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa* in 2009. The relevance of the book has resulted in the play being widely read amongst theatre students; however, there are no video or photographic records of the production besides the photographs in the book and no reviews were to be acquired. I did not view this production run and have thus only read the script.

As has been discussed, there was not much information to be obtained relating to the staging of the 2006 production of *Armed Response* at the WITS theatre. Even in the book *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa*, descriptions of the play are mostly in terms of the storyline and themes, with no impressions given of the theatrical devices used or the way they affected audiences.

4.2.7 *Reach* – Lara Foot Newton

Written and directed by Lara Foot Newton, *Reach* premiered in 2007 at the TheaterFormen Festival in Hanover, Germany, followed by the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. It was directed by Clare Stopford and starred Aletta Bezuidenhout and Mbulelo Grootboom. Mannie Manim designed the lighting and Birrie le Roux designed the set. *Reach* then toured Sweden in September 2007; John Fiske and Paul Savage directed and Swedish actress Anna Carlson starred alongside South African actor Andile Nebulane. It opened in the presence of South African Ambassador Mr SR Makgetla and the head of the Uppsala Culture Board Mr Jan-Erik Wickstrom at the Regina Theatre in Uppsala. It was then performed at Norrlands Operan in Umeå and the Boulevard Theatre in Stockholm. The play is set in a quiet area of the Eastern Cape in an isolated house where an aging Marion Banning mourns the losses in her life. Her son, Jonathan, was killed in a violent crime, her daughter, Anne, and grandchildren have emigrated to Australia, and her husband Frank has divorced and left her. Solomon Xaba, a local youth who witnessed her son's death, comes to confess to her about what he knows, but he is unable to when he sees how tragic her situation is.

SOLOMON: In my culture the last person to see someone alive is supposed to speak at the funeral. You are supposed to tell the listeners what you saw and what you heard so that the living can be at peace with the whole story, with the truth about the death. I've been coming here for years, watching you - trying to find the right time. Carrying this thing with me. Walking with it. If you do not do this then you can become sick, you can be cursed with bad memories and bad dreams. I think that is why I got so sick. Then last year I went to the mountains. I became a man. On the mountains we are taught to face our responsibilities (Foot Newton, 2009: 63).

He returns and does odd repairs to Marion's house and brings her groceries to atone for his role in allowing Jonathan's killers to escape justice. Marion becomes the mother-figure that Solomon no longer has and longs for, and Solomon becomes the son that Marion lost; they each gain someone to care for. Through the process of Solomon's visits, Marion learns about his Xhosa culture and Solomon learns that some of his assumptions about white people are not universally applicable. They make a strange pair, but provide one another with the healing that they both so desperately needed. *Reach* is a touching story about the ripple effects of violent crime and the difficult process of overcoming victimisation or the fear of victimisation. I have not watched a staging of this play, but have read the script.

4.2.8 *Brothers in Blood* – Mike Van Graan

Brothers in Blood, written by Mike Van Graan, first premiered at the Market Theatre in May 2009. Charles Diamond, a South African businessman and supporter of Van Graan's work, funded the creation of this original piece of theatre. It was staged for a second time in 2012 at the National Arts Festival and Artscape Theatre. Greg Homann directed both of these stagings and Denis Hutchinson provided the design for both seasons. The 2009 production starred Dale Abrahams, Kim Cloete, David Dennis, Karabo Kgokong and Murray Todd; and the 2012 productions starred David Dennis, Conrad Kemp, Harrison Makubalo, Aimee Valentine and Kurt Egothof. In *Brothers in Blood*, Van Graan explores the intersected lives of a Christian minister, a Muslim school principal and a Jewish doctor. The play is set at the height of the PAGAD (People against Gangsterism and Drugs) bombings and vigilante violence in Cape Town and the various characters' responses to it. Abubaker Abrahams is a single father and devout Muslim who, after losing his wife and son to gang violence in his neighbourhood, tries to move himself and his daughter Leila to the more affluent suburbs where they might be safer. Brian Cohen is a Jew, a doctor and a member of his local neighbourhood watch. He crosses paths with Abrahams and a misunderstanding leads them to a heated confrontation around race and religion. Ironically, Cohen, like Abrahams is motivated by the need to protect his family; he joins the neighbourhood watch after his son's school bus is attacked in an allegedly anti-Semitic attack. Lionel Fredericks is a preacher from the same neighbourhood as Abrahams and Leila. Fredericks has more extreme views and is inspired by the PAGAD attacks to encourage his congregation to respond in a similar way to the criminality in their area. His hatred of the criminality in the area is fuelled by the fact that his son committed suicide after struggling with drug addiction. Fredericks is forced to see the drug dealer who sold his son the drugs that led to his death on a daily basis and accept that the police have not and will not do anything to get him off the streets. Leila is a young, liberal Muslim woman who is more concerned with her studies and dance clubs than she is with any of the weightier issues referenced in the play. She has a romance with

Fadiel, a Somali immigrant and fellow Muslim student, which results in a pregnancy. Leila seeks an abortion at the local clinic and is helped by Dr. Cohen, but Fadiel, Fredericks and Abrahams all become involved as the 'right to life' issue threatens Cohen and Leila's lives. The vigilante actions of PAGAD are quietly supported by Abrahams and Fredericks, but cause fear and insecurity for Cohen, Leila and Fadiel.⁶³ *Brothers in Blood* is as much about religion as it is about masculinity, family, insecurity and the escalation of violence. I have read the play and I watched the 2012 production at the Artscape Theatre.

Described as being well-written, the main criticism of *Brothers in Blood* was that it attempted to cover too many themes in one play (Gaylard, 2012: 95). "There are times, however, when *Brothers in Blood* attempts to do too much. Apart from religious prejudice, it also deals with crime, community efforts to respond to it (in particular, the efforts of People Against Gangsterism and Drugs), xenophobia, abortion and middle-class aspirations" (August, 2012). Presented on a minimalist set of a few plain rostra and a wire fence, the play intersperses live action with video projections in a manner that one reviewer described as being reminiscent of the 2004 Robert Altman film *Crash* ("Theatre Review: Brothers in Blood", 2009). As a result of the minimalist set, the acting becomes the focus of the play and the performances for both production runs were described favourably. "The play's success hinges in no small part on the actor's moving and dignified representation of his character" (Gaylard, 2012: 94).

"Does the play do what it seemingly sets out to do? Not entirely – but it may be a more interesting play as a result. It's [sic] examination of the issues around PAGAD and drugs and vigilante action is only partly convincing" (Gaylard, 2012: 96). Again, the overriding impression of this production is that it had too much going on. The focus was supposed to be on the interfaith relationships; however, it is equally focussed on the experience of living in a criminalised society and then later shifts focus entirely to discuss the morality of abortions. Rob Gaylard describes this shift as being "somewhat at odds with the claim to be exploring inter-faith conflict, and leads to a somewhat contrived and melodramatic conclusion" (Gaylard, 2012: 96).

4.2.9 Other People's Lives – Amy Jephtha

Amy Jephtha's play *Other People's Lives* premiered in 2011 at a staged reading at the Artscape Theatre as part of their seventh Spring Drama Season, directed by Alex Halligey, and featuring Jenny Stead, Liezl de Kock, Mark Elderkin and Jill Levenberg. In 2012 it was fully staged as a play as part of the eighth Spring Drama Season at the Artscape Theatre,

⁶³ Fadiel is mistrustful of the work of vigilante groups like PAGAD because their form of mob justice is reminiscent of the xenophobic violence that killed his father.

with Sanjin Muftic directing, Ilka Louw providing the set and costume design, and Alfred Rietmann designing the lighting. This time Jayne Batzofin, Carla Fonseca, Carel Nel and Lauren Steyn performed. *Other People's Lives* is the story of two couples who live together in an apartment building. Meg and Larry are a married couple and live one floor below Jane and Claire, a lesbian couple. They live essentially separate lives until one day a brutal act of violence invades all of their lives. The narrative spans two years, as Jane and Claire explore their budding relationship and Meg and Larry contemplate rejuvenating their marriage by having a baby. Jephtha makes a bold statement about our desire to pretend the suffering of others away; and her portrayal of the aftermath of this denial in the face of such devastation is a stark reminder of our sometimes strained sense of community. I watched *Other People's Lives* at the Artscape Theatre in 2012 and have read a copy of the unpublished script.

Most reviews of the production were positive; however, reviewers Daniel Dercksen (2012) and Rory Berry (2012) were critical of Jephtha's writing and suggested that the script required further development. Berry identified the problem areas as being "clumsy dialogue" and a lack of build-up and release to the tension created by the heavy content (2012). Dercksen identified the problem areas as being a lack of dramatic content which caused the play to fail at captivating the audience despite its short length of sixty minutes (2012). "South African theatre at present is severely influenced by the sitcom world in television, where everything is cut down to its bare minimum and everything happens as quickly as possible, completely taking the pleasure out of spending a night at the theatre, where we can fully escape into new and refreshing plays, and not rush to escape out of the theatre" (Dercksen, 2012). In another review, the writing is described as being "sharp and precise, unravelling the moral core of the characters" (Anon., 2012) and Tracey Saunders of the Cape Times described Jephtha's writing as being "a scalpel-like revelation of everyday prejudices [that] comments on our complicity in the crass violence of urban living" (2012). The set design by Ilka Louw featured a couch positioned centre stage with three tables with boxes on the top (interpreted as a variety of different furniture pieces throughout the play) positioned in separate rows at stage left and stage right at the outer edges of the stage light, which was dimly focused on the couch. The stage left side primarily indicates Larry and Meg's flat and the stage right side primarily functions as Claire and Jane's apartment. They share the couch at centre stage. Numerous items of clothing hang suspended from the ceiling as if a tornado has been frozen in time.

Illka Louw's monochromatic set design deftly delineates the two households whilst simultaneously allowing them to overlap in both time and space. The beige and grey reflect another dimension of the murkiness of personal choices; nothing is succinctly black and white. Clothing and random objects of their lives are suspended as if after the explosion of their everyday reality. The attention to detail in the mundane props of living; wallet, coffee cups, socks, gives the production a striking visual coherence. Exits, entrances and transitions are faded in with masterful lighting by Alfred Rietmann (Saunders, 2012).

Dercksen describes the design as, "minimalism [...] stretched to the maximum" (2012).

4.2.10 *Bullets over Bishop Lavis* – Christo Davids and Jody Abrahams

Bullets over Bishop Lavis, written by Christo Davids and Jody Abrahams, premiered at the 2011 KKNK in Oudtshoorn where it was nominated for a Kyk-Net Fiesta Award. It was directed by Jody Abrahams and starred Bronwyn van Graan, Erica Wessels, Charlton George, Abduragman Adams and Euodia Samson. In 2012 it showed in Cape Town for the first time at the Suid-Oostefees (Festival) at the Artscape Theatre, the Woordfees (Festival) in Stellenbosch and the Baxter Theatre with Abduragman Adams, Charlton George and Euodia Samson reprising their roles and Diaan Lawrenson joining the cast. The production is about the aftermath of a shooting in the gang-infested Cape Flats neighbourhood of Bishop Lavis that, years later, tears the lives of four friends apart when the truth finally comes out. Ronnie and Jerome are cousins who grew up in Bishop Lavis as brothers and as young men in the 1990s (depicted in flashback scenes); Jerome was an ideological freedom fighter in the struggle against apartheid and Ronnie was studying to be a lawyer. A dramatic suspense drama, *Bullets over Bishop Lavis* revolves around three separate incidents involving Ronnie's need to make something of his life and leave the Flats. The first is an accidental shooting which his cousin Jerome takes the blame for. When the production begins Jerome has just been released from prison and makes an unannounced visit to Ronnie's upmarket house in Vredehoek. Jerome finds that after years of incarceration, Bishop Lavis is a different place and that Ronnie's loyalty is not what he had expected. Ronnie is now an important criminal lawyer with a new wife, Arnel Strydom. The characters then dodge an inevitable confrontation as Ronnie's investigative journalist wife, Arnel, demands to know who his friend is and Jerome tries to get rid of her so that he can confess the truth behind his incarceration to the woman who brought him to the house and Ronnie's ex-wife, Malaysia. Malaysia is the central figure that links all of the characters: she is Ronnie's ex-wife, Jerome's childhood friend and the topic of Arnel's latest story on violence on the Cape Flats. Malaysia is a nurse at a rehabilitation centre in Bishop Lavis and the victim of a tragic loss resulting from a fateful stray bullet. *Bullets over Bishop Lavis* is a classic crime story with a

suspenseful twist. It does not discuss the criminalised nature of South African society but rather uncovers attitudes about crime and responsibility, about gangsterism and the innocent civilians who have to live amidst the gang wars. I have not read the script of *Bullets over Bishop Lavis*, but in 2012 I watched a performance at the Baxter Theatre.

4.2.11 *The Three Little Pigs* – Rob Van Vuuren, James Cairns, Albert Pretorius and Tara Notcutt

Written by Rob Van Vuuren, James Cairns, Albert Pretorius and Tara Notcutt in 2012, *The Three Little Pigs* is a workshopped abstract theatre piece about police corruption and criminality in the ranks of the SAPS. It premiered at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in 2012 where it was one of the top three highest grossing shows. The play then enjoyed a run at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town in 2013 before embarking on an international tour of arts festivals facilitated by the World Fringe Alliance. Destinations included Perth, New York, Amsterdam, Dublin, London and the Woordfees in Stellenbosch, the KKNK in Oudtshoorn and the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. Tara Notcutt directed actors Rob Van Vuuren, James Cairns and Albert Pretorius; Juanita Ferreira designed the set, Matt Lansing designed the lighting and Gary Thomas composed the original score. Based on the popular children's folk tale, *The Three Little Pigs* is a nod to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* that uses animals to represent the various characters tied up in a corrupt police investigation involving police officers and organised crime figures. It references gritty American crime television shows such as *The Wire* (2002-2008) and *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) and borrows from their style, genre and filmic techniques. Two brothers and members of the Pig Force (signifying the SAPS) are found murdered, leaving their youngest brother to navigate the corruption in law enforcement to uncover their killer. The prime suspect is the Big Bad Wolf, an organised crime boss and owner of Wolfie's Strip Club. The action is mainly moved along by investigators from the Dog Squad (signifying the Independent Police Investigations Directorate or IPID), named Sergeant Doberman and Vark Jansen, who are heading up an investigation by the National Poultry Authority (signifying the National Prosecuting Authority or NPA) into the death of the two Pig Force detectives. Doberman represents the rookie detective, unfamiliar with the level of rot within law enforcement and Vark Jansen is a caricature of the old SAP detectives, whose main method of obtaining information was intimidation and violence (Shaw, 2002). Several characters cross paths with them to present evidence in the case that the pig brothers were working on before they were killed, including Bunsy (a randy gym-owning rabbit), Sparkles (a feline stripper at Wolfie's Strip Club) and the Hyena bouncers (who also work at the strip club). A well-written and imaginative suspense thriller, *The Three Little Pigs* is an intelligent dialogue about our deepest misgivings about the SAPS. I have not read the script, but have watched

the production in 2013 at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and at the Woordfees Festival in Stellenbosch.

The Three Little Pigs was very well received, both in terms of financial success, as was discussed earlier, and in terms of reviewer impressions. The set design is minimalist, “[a] table, some chairs, scattered straw and a fence” (Wood, 2013) and is described by reviewers as being highly effective in conjunction with the lighting design (Graham, 2013a). David Fick describes the combination of design elements as “creat[ing] a world that fascinates and toys with the audience. It feels creepy and dangerous, a minimalistic and yet completely thrilling visual and auditory environment” (Fick, 2013).

The versatile physical characterisations performed by van Vuuren, Cairns and Pretorius were the highlight of the play and are widely lauded as being the aspect of *The Three Little Pigs* that made it such an enjoyable and memorable theatre experience (Fick, 2013). “The show captivates from beginning to end, with the audience rooting all the way for the Little Pig, perfectly played by Van Vuuren” (Wood, 2013). Graham describes his overall impression of the play as it being “a funny but disturbingly dark whodunit in a very real South African context. It’s hilariously funny in parts, but I wonder just how many of us are laughing without a little uneasy foreboding in our stomachs?” (2013a). Wood credits the mastery of the three actors as being the determining factor of the play’s success, but also mentions the “impressive fluidity [that is provided] by the subtle changes in lighting and character with each consecutive scene. Matt Lansing’s lighting design is a faultless match for the startling adaptability of Cairns, van Vuuren and Pretorius” (2013).

David Fick, having viewed the play in two different theatre spaces, makes certain observations about audience reception to the play that occurred during the performances that he attended. He firstly finds the arts festival audience in Grahamstown more receptive to the political references in the play and the societal implications of the police behaviour being described in the action of the play than the audience at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town. He secondly describes his impression of how the smaller venue in Grahamstown heightened the tension and suspense of the action more than the Baxter Theatre did. He finally draws an interesting conclusion based on his experiences:

While I certainly found the Grahamstown audience more engaged with the politics of the play, I had the feeling that people (in both audiences) were watching this play in the same way many of us watch the politics of this country play out: with more apathy than we should have and with an attitude that focuses more on our right to speak out about social injustice than on our responsibility to do something about it. We are our own reality television show (Fick, 2013).

Fierce debate has been sparked by this production amongst critics and artists in the theatre community as to whether or not it is protest theatre. Fick disagrees with the notion that *The Three Little Pigs* is a throwback to the protest theatre of the anti-apartheid era of theatre-making: “The direct call to action that characterises so many protest theatre pieces of the 1980s simply is not a factor here. This is not to say that *The Three Little Pigs* is a lesser piece of theatre: it is completely brilliant, but it takes a different form, and the old labels are of little help here” (2013).

4.2.12 *iSystem* – Anele Rusi

Anele Rusi’s *iSystem* premiered at the eighth annual Spring Drama Season at the Artscape Theatre in 2012 as one of its showcase productions. It is the first play that Rusi has ever written and it was directed by his mentor Fatima Dike. The set and costume were designed by Willem Breyl and the production featured Zondwa Njokeni, Riaan Visman, Melikhaya Tana, Them bani Luzipho and Thando Baliso. The following year Rusi penned a longer version with the same title which premiered at the Artscape’s ninth Spring Drama Season. Once again Fatima Dike directed and Zondwa Njokeni, Riaan Visman and Them bani Luzipho reprised their roles. Sizwe Msuthu and Stefan Erasmus joined the cast and Willem Breyl and Alfred Rietmann designed the set and lighting respectively. Gideon Lombard also joined this run of the production as the fight director. The play follows the IPID investigation of an alleged case of police brutality. But, things are not always black and white for police officers in the line of duty. The two officers, Solomon and Dickson, attempt to come to terms with the death of an innocent civilian during a raid that went horribly wrong, while their Station Captain Vezakhe runs interference with the IPID investigator, who is also incidentally his former girlfriend, Nomsa Khuzwayo. The humanity and vulnerability of the police officers are explored amidst this crisis. It is a thought-provoking depiction of the difficulties that SAPS officers have to face every day. I have not read the script, but watched a staging of the play in 2013 at the Artscape Theatre.

The set design of *iSystem* (2013) can be described as being a drab and minimalist affair, reflective of the interior of police stations all over South Africa. The lack of distinguishing features to the station suggests that it could depict any police station in the country. Likewise, the costume design is all grey-toned police blues and black; which, combined with the set design, conveys a sense of bureaucracy and drudgery. The police in this play are presented as beleaguered civil servants, struggling against the seemingly endless stream of criminality in South Africa. “Rusi’s extensive research is evident in this incarnation and the characters are dense and believable” (Saunders, 2013). Clifford Graham goes on to describe the 2013 incarnation of the play as being “gripping” except for the opening scene,

which is described as having a much slower pace than the rest of the script and “laboured dialogue” (2013b). The overall impression provided by the reviews and interviews is that the play offers an important perspective of the criminalised society and that all South Africans should view the production and engage in subsequent discussions about the challenges faced by the SAPS and what citizens can do to help them in the execution of their duties. Veteran director Fatima Dike is praised for her role as mentor and the way in which she brought vulnerable and conflicted characters to the stage as director of both versions of the play. “Direction by Fatima Dike keeps the pace alive and brings out the subtle nuances of each character to good effect. The design is simple and striking by Willaim Breyll (set) and Alfred Rietmann (sound and lighting) is in combination effective and striking. No room for any surreal or overly artistic effect here the plot harsh and realistic takes precedence” (Graham, 2013b).

4.3 Responses or the tiers of experience

As discussed in Chapter Two and the introduction to this chapter, the two most prevalent experiences people have of living in the criminalised society are: the effects of crime; and the effects of fear of crime. The previous section discussed how the plays have explored the effects of various crimes on victims, bystanders and the people that support them through the characters’ expressions of these experiences. The following section seeks to discuss how the plays have explored the effects of fear of crime on individuals; however, as was demonstrated in Chapter Two, fear of crime and insecurity are not solely experienced by people who have been victims or bystanders of violent criminal acts. Rather, these responses to the criminalised society are influenced by an individual’s perception of their risk of victimisation. Surveys conducted on various South Africans in various areas of the country revealed that the anxiety and fear that these individuals had about being potential victims of crime far outweighed their actual risk of being affected by crime (Burton *et al.*, 2004). The way that people will react or respond to a crime, or the threat of crime, varies depending on several factors. Hans Visser, vice-chairperson of the Security Officers Board, states: “The rate of crime is influenced by the public’s perception of crime; because the *perception* of crime is greater, there is more of a demand for services” (Gollan, 2001).

Perceptions can be based on a number of factors: class, race, gender, culture, religion, education, political affiliation and level of exposure to criminal acts. According to research, an individual can be exposed to a criminal act in one of three ways. If they are directly (or physically in the case of violent crime) involved in the crime either as a victim or perpetrator then they can be said to have had ‘primary exposure’ to the criminal act. If the individual is a bystander or has secondary contact with the victim or perpetrator after the criminal act, then

their exposure can be described as 'secondary'. 'Tertiary exposure' is understood to be experienced by individuals who have had no direct contact with the criminal act, the victim or the perpetrator, but who are nonetheless engaged in discourse around that criminal act. Therefore, 'primary exposure', 'secondary exposure' and 'tertiary exposure' can be understood as referring to the manner in which and/or degree to which an individual has experienced crime.

For the purposes of this study, the three levels of exposure to crime will be categorised or explained further as being: the *initial* experience, the *responding* experience, and the *reacting* experience. The *initial* experience can be understood as being the direct encounter between the perpetrator(s) and victim(s), thus referring to primary exposure to the actual interpersonal criminal act/event. The experience and interpretation of this occurrence differs greatly between the victim and the perpetrator. As discussed in Chapter One, this study is more concerned with the victim's and bystander's impressions of this interaction than with the perpetrators, as more South Africans are victims or bystanders than are criminals; this study is particularly interested in responses related to re-victimisation as was observed in audience members viewing performances of *6 Mins* and *Pocket Shots*. When making reference to the *initial* experience, this study is therefore only making reference to the victim's or bystander's experiences of the interpersonal criminal act/event.

The *responding* experience can be understood as referring to the responses of friends, family and members of society who have heard/been informed/read about the initial experience, which has involved violence/criminality against their loved ones or acquaintances or individuals with whom they identify. It also indicates the empathy that they express in imagining themselves in the victim's situation.

The *reacting* experience can be understood as referring to the reactions of individuals who are able to report on, reflect on and/or discuss the *initial experience* from some distance – either physical and/or emotional. These individuals may include media representatives, artists, social commentators, and historians – but may also include ordinary people who have no sympathetic/empathetic response to the criminal act/experience for any number of reasons. Reacting individuals are often keenly interested in how individual incidents relate to similar crimes and the patterns of criminality in the criminalised society in general. The nature of their reaction depends on: the level of interest these agents have in the type of crime that has been committed (for example, interpersonal or property); the demographics of the victim and the perpetrator (particularly whether or not either party share any

demographics with the other); and the intended target audience of their reaction.⁶⁴ In the case of professional commentators, such as journalists, academics, filmmakers, writers, and theatre-makers, their reaction is often determined by, and designed for, an intended target audience. The position that these responders fill in the cultural discourse around crime affects which aspects of the criminal act/experience are discussed, how they are discussed and in which form their reaction will be communicated to their target audience. In the case of ordinary people, there is not necessarily a target audience and their reaction is not necessarily intended to communicate anything. In the case of Ivan Vladislavic's bunch of keys in *Portrait with Keys* (discussed in Chapter One), he did not increase his personal security measures in response to crime in his neighbourhood to communicate anything to an intended audience; he added locks to his home to protect himself and paid scant attention to what other people thought about that reaction (Vladislavic, 2006). For ordinary citizens, the reacting experience is an instinctual response (which can take many forms) to being informed that a criminal act has taken place.

A distinction must be made here between responding and reacting experiences of the crime event: it can be argued that most people do not react in the same way to notification of the victimisation of someone known to them as they do to the news that someone with whom they do not identify has fallen victim to interpersonal crime. All three tiers of experience relate to emotional and psychological effects that crime can have on people. The main purpose of a distinction between the three is therefore intended to differentiate between three very different sources of stimuli that all result in the varying reactions to living in the criminalised society.

The initial response is commonly staged as a practical re-enactment of a fictional interpersonal crime as this term describes a victim's experience of the crime event and fictional depictions of this response therefore benefit from the audience witnessing the staged crime taking place and being able to visually draw their own conclusions. The responding reactions are those of the loved ones or acquaintances who have been notified of the victim's ordeal and their responses to this news. The staging of fictional representations of these responses therefore commonly benefits from the audience seeing or hearing how the respondents came to know about their loved one or acquaintance's victimisation.

⁶⁴ Their reaction could be intended for the benefit of communicating certain opinions about the crime to others or it could be as a result of their psychological/ emotional process of coming to terms with the crime.

These responses are not always immediate and respondents often consider the ramifications of the initial crime event and its effects very carefully and contemplate their potential reactions before exhibiting any kind of visible response to hearing of the crime. The amount of time that respondents spend reacting to the news of the crime varies greatly depending on age, race, culture, class, gender, religion, education, political affiliation, personality, and level of exposure to criminal acts of the respondent. Some respondents spend years of their lives modifying or adapting their behaviour in response to hearing about a loved one's victimisation, while others respond immediately and do not alter their lifestyles or behaviour based on hearing about the crime. This also depends on the crime in question and the closeness of the relation to the victim. Violent interpersonal crimes, as previously discussed, often elicit the most extreme responses from people, particularly when death, injury or a sexual aspect is involved. Immediate family members will have a much more extreme reaction than casual acquaintances will to news of a crime. In the case of murder or a crime resulting in death, responses are motivated by grief, shock and 'utility' - there are legal and practical affairs involved in burying a person. This is typically the family's duty. In the case of assault and sexual assault, acquaintances may be required to help the victim seek medical attention or provide basic medical attention to the victim following the attack. If the victim is detained in a hospital, loved ones may want to go visit the victim or retrieve essentials for them such as clothing and toiletries. In other forms of interpersonal crime, loved ones may be inclined to offer emotional support to the victim or, if needed, psychological or financial support. These forms of practical assistance are examples of utilitarian responses.

Finally, besides the above mentioned reactions relating to the practical delivery of support to victims, the respondents may also react by changing their social habits or lifestyle patterns in order to protect themselves from potential victimisation. These reactions could occur directly after being made aware of their loved one's victimisation or sometime after the event following careful consideration of the impact of the crime. These reactions could refer to attitude changes (such as mistrust, paranoia, aggressiveness or prejudice) or changes in behaviour (such as increasing personal security measures, avoiding certain areas at night, travelling in groups or restricting social interaction).

It can be argued that theatre-makers, particularly those examined in this study, are primarily involved in depicting the *reacting* response when creating work about the criminalised society. This is not to say that theatre-makers staging the criminalised society are not, or cannot have been, victims or perpetrators of crime (of the same type as is detailed in their script or enacted in their production); or that they cannot have been inspired to create this work based on their direct or indirect experience of a crime. Rather, it is a suggestion about

the purpose/power of theatre performance itself, namely that the deliberate process of producing a script, drama, show etc. for an audience demands a degree of detached scrutiny in order to manipulate the elements of story, performance and staging into a refined and proficient production (Carlson, 2003: 23). There are two uses of the term *reacting response* evident here: firstly, in reference to the use of the medium of theatre to communicate sentiments about the criminalised society; and secondly, in reference to the use of the reacting experience itself as a theme or subject in a play about the criminalised society.

Unless this personal information is explicitly shared by the theatre-maker(s) – indicating that the work is/was inspired by an initial, responding or reacting experience - it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about the role that their personal experiences of the criminalised society has had in the formation of their work. As stated in Chapter Three, it is understood that plays are inevitably influenced by their theatre-maker's environment and personal experience of living in this environment, but it is not the intention of this study to analyse the extent to which theatre-makers staging experiences of living in the criminalised society have themselves experienced these interactions with criminality; or to be drawn into the debate around who is 'suitably qualified by experience' to tell which story that sometimes forms around issues of representation in South African theatre. Elin Diamond asserts that,

While a performance embeds traces of other performances, it also produces an experience whose interpretation only partially depends on previous experience. Hence the terminology of "re" in discussion of performance, as in *remember*, *reinscribe*, *reconfigure*, *retiterate*, *restore*. "Re" acknowledges the pre-existing discursive field, the repetition within the performative present, but "figure", "script", and "iterate" assert the possibility of something that exceeds our knowledge, that alters the shape of sites and imagines new unsuspected subject positions (in Carlson, 2003: 2–3).

It is therefore an assertion of this study that any form of representation or recreation or re-enactment of the experiences, in particular, of living in the criminalised society (taken to indicate experiences of criminality as well as experiences of behaviour modification in response to potential victimisation) is by virtue of its measured formation a kind of reacting response. In this sense, this study can be considered to be primarily engaged with discussing the dynamics and principles of the third instance of experience. To reiterate, these experiences could be understood as follows: the *initial* experience describes primary exposure to a criminal act, the *responding* experience describes secondary exposure to a criminal act and the *reacting* experience describes a tertiary exposure to a criminal act.

However, this study has chosen not to refer to these three phenomena as 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' as this might suggest that they follow a consecutive order, which is not always the case. In some instances, the *responding* and *reacting* experiences never happen; in other cases, no detail is known about the *initial* experience, but a fiery debate ensues in response to the *reacting* experience that people are experiencing about the crime (an example of this would be a debate in the media or on social media about criminality and potential victimisation).

Theatre works (as part of the mass communication culture that promotes or disrupts the hegemony of phenomena like the crime wave) can be understood as reacting responses to the criminalised society (despite the fact that they can *present* initial, responding or reacting responses), and that this study can be seen in terms of performance studies as an investigation of the reacting responses emerging from the theatre industry over the past two decades. This study will now investigate the stages of experience that theatre-makers are choosing to portray in their work and the levels of success that they are having in this regard.

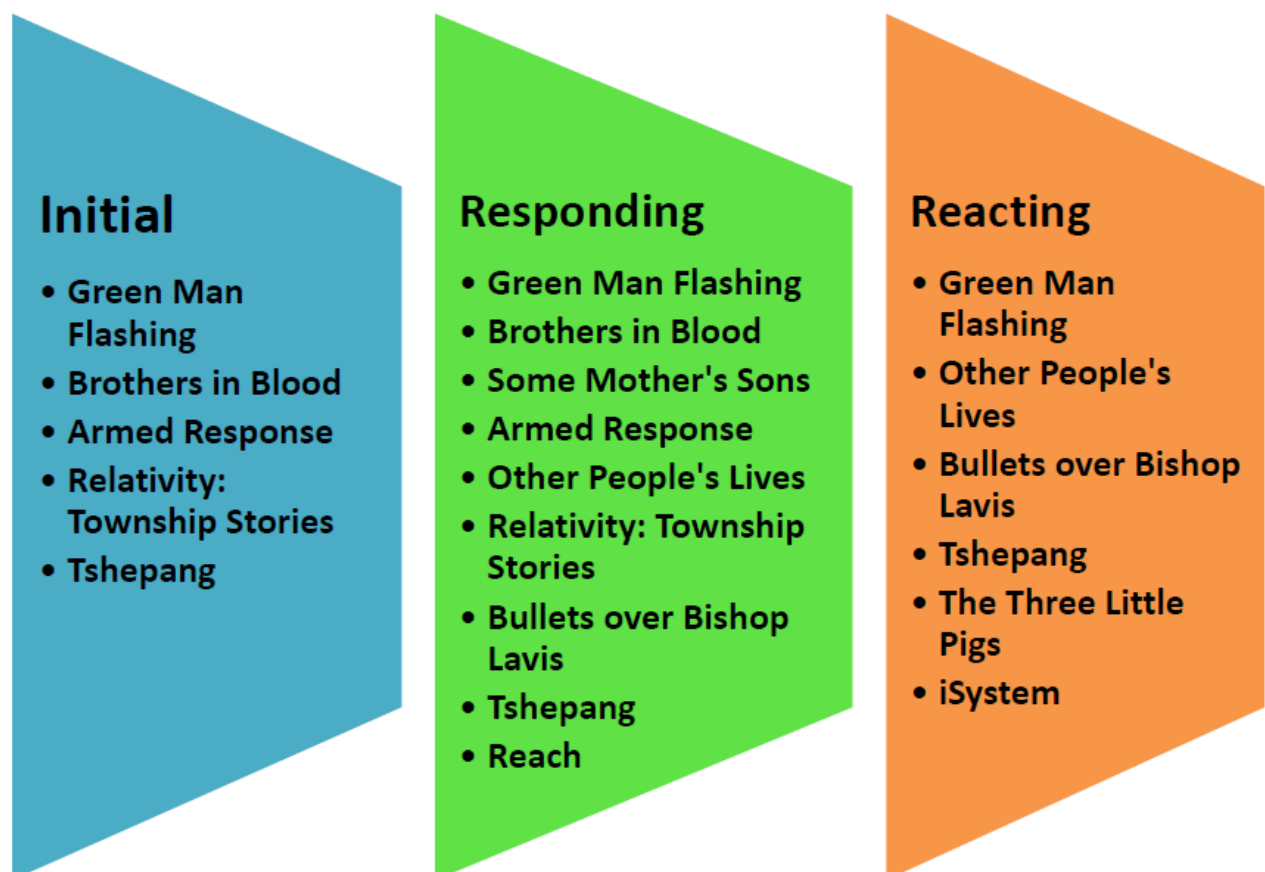


Figure 3: The plays according to the type of individual exposure to violent crime that they explore

On first glance at the list (Fig. 3), it is immediately apparent that the majority of the plays in this study are staging representations of the *responding* experience of crime.⁶⁵

4.3.1 Theatrical engagement with the *initial* response to crime

Plays that have staged the initial response to crime include, *Green Man Flashing*, *Brothers in Blood*, *Armed Response*, *Relativity: Township Stories* and *Tshepang*. As has been stated, the initial response is intimately linked to an actual crime event and therefore plays staging this response can be expected to depict, or at least reference, a criminal act at some point in the play/production. In *Green Man Flashing*, the initial crimes are not staged and therefore not witnessed by the audience; however, the shooting that is the story's tipping point is staged. The death of Gabby and Aaron's son and Gabby's rape are discussed and alluded to, but not enacted in any way. Some of the scenes following these events (Inspector Abrahams arriving at their house to inform them of their son's murder, for example) are presented as flashbacks that sporadically interrupt the action of the play. The audience does not witness the aftermath of Gabby shooting Luthando Nyaka; Aaron rushes in after hearing gunshots and discovers what has happened. The action then cuts back like a film to the courtroom setting where Gabby gives her evidence via a video statement.

In *Brothers in Blood*, Cohen interrogates Abrahams after he finds him wandering the streets of his neighbourhood. As a member of the neighbourhood watch, Cohen finds the presence of the solitary stranger in the neighbourhood suspicious and forces him into a room, demanding to know his intentions. Abrahams is put off by his unwarranted aggression and suspicion and refuses to communicate with Cohen. Tension is high in this scene, as Abrahams is a devout Muslim and Cohen a committed Jew and they seem to have a mutual distrust of one another's religious/cultural group. Eventually, Cohen assaults Abrahams out of frustration and his subsequent embarrassment at this violent outburst diffuses their conflict. Abrahams's actual purpose for being in Cohen's neighbourhood is to look for a house to move himself and his daughter into, in order to avoid the gang violence in their own neighbourhood. The scene is a poignant portrayal of the power struggles at play in post-apartheid South Africa between the young and the old; men and women; the affluent and the poor; blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians; the formerly oppressed and the former oppressor; various cultural groups; and Christian, Muslim and Jew. In a simple way it reveals how easy it is to fall victim to a violent crime such as assault when tensions are high and verbal communication breaks down.

⁶⁵ *Thabo for Thabo*, a playlet from *Dinner Talk*, has been omitted from these lists, as well as *Dinner Talk* itself, because *Thabo for Thabo* is essentially just a shorter version of *Some Mother's Sons*.

There are several simulated crimes in *Armed Response*, although the initial response is not the main focus of the play. Anna is accosted and assaulted in the darkened street outside of her house and then later in the play is attacked again by an armed assailant in her home. Both assaults take place with the stage lights dimmed and Anna is seemingly attacked by a shadowy figure that is almost more shape than person. This stylised villain further enhances the growing mood of fear in the play; Anna cannot identify or even describe her attacker, leaving police unable to assist her. This abandonment further enhances her fear.

Relativity: Township Stories features a milieu of violent criminal acts being recreated on stage. The play opens with a teenage girl running across the stage in panic, fleeing an unseen assailant. Before long she is raped, strangled and left for dead in the middle of the stage where the detectives find her as the stage lights come up. The play also features a gangster beating his pregnant girlfriend and a murderer killing off his victims one by one. Many reviewers described the staged violence as excessive and uncomfortable to watch. “Probably one of the most disturbing aspects of this production was the very aggressive, realistic nature of the smaller acts of violence – the slapping, shoving and the pushing” (Bayne, 2011). Considering the fact that the theatre-makers style themselves after Hollywood film director Quentin Tarantino, who is known for using gratuitous violence in his films, it can be assumed that the graphic depictions of violent crime (and plenty of them) were an intended element of the play designed to contribute to the style of storytelling. Grootboom and Chweneyagae can therefore be considered to have succeeded in their intended staging of these initial experiences.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the act of violent crime featured in *Tshepang* is one of the most controversial and haunting uses of stagecraft to emerge in South African theatre within the last two decades. The rape of baby Tshepang was depicted by forcefully pushing a broom handle into a loaf of bread until it disintegrated. This image sparked outcry from many as being too graphic, and this raised questions about the nature of the moral responsibility that artists have when considering how to stage what are essentially degrading violations of human rights. It has been mentioned that an exam question asking matric learners how they would bring this stage direction in the script to life lead to outrage and controversy. Marx and Foot Newton were understandably reluctant to portray a realistic baby rape and this, as an image, would have been far more traumatising to audiences than that of the metaphoric solution of the loaf of bread. The other violent crime described in the play is the childhood beating of Alfred - Ruth's boyfriend and the man guilty of raping baby Tshepang. Simon describes the incident in which a young Alfred is brutally beaten with a broom by his father's girlfriend as punishment for wetting his pants. She breaks the broomstick across his body. The stage directions describe this action as follows: “The broom breaks, and [Simon] looks

at it in horror. It takes on the form of the broken bones of little Alfred” (Foot Newton, 2005: 29). Some violent crimes can be too horrific for audiences to watch without being negatively affected (be that psychologically or emotionally) and this is a factor that theatre-maker’s choosing to stage violent criminal acts need to consider. It should also be acknowledged that audience sensitivities should not completely dissuade theatre-makers or artists from producing work about crime or staging criminal acts. But, it would be irresponsible to stage disturbing images without taking the effects that it may have on the audiences or performers into account.

4.3.2 Theatrical engagement with the *responding* reactions to crime

Responding reactions to crime that are portrayed in the selected plays/productions typically centre on one or more character’s responses to the criminalised state of their social environment. These responses can include fear, insecurity, frustration or anger. The theatrical engagement with initial responses to crime typically involved the re-enactment of some form of interpersonal or contact crime, whereas the theatrical engagement with responding reactions to crime included a wide variety of theatrical devices. The responding reactions to crime can be understood as being the result of secondary exposure to interpersonal crime. The respondents are seldom themselves victims of the crime in question. Their responses are therefore based on the kind of empathy that they feel for the victims of crime who are known to them.

In *Green Man Flashing* there are two crimes that the characters respond to. Firstly, there is the murder of Matthew, Gabby and Aaron’s son. Aaron does not mourn the loss of his son with an expressive form of grief and Gabby interprets this as a lack of emotion about the loss of their child. She comes to resent his perceived lack of emotion which leads to their divorce. Aaron also has difficulty remaining in the same house that they shared with Matthew before he died and is glad to move away from this site of painful memories. In the action set in the present-day, Gabby and her friend Anna still resent Aaron for his lack of emotion following the death of his son. Both Aaron and Gabby have seemingly moved on from the death of their son; however, it is clear from their interactions throughout the play that they have never properly discussed it with one another and it remains an unresolved issue between them.

Secondly, there is Gabby’s rape, which is the reason why Aaron and Luthando’s paths cross with hers in this part of the play. Aaron’s response to his ex-wife’s sexual assault is unclear as it is shaded by his responsibilities to his position in the ruling political party. He volunteers for the job of buying her silence in order to protect her from the potential intimidation that his colleagues might have used and he further defends her from Luthando’s aggressive

approach and accusatory comments. However, his good intentions are called into question by the fact that he is determined to convince Gabby to accept the offered bribe and thus forego her rights to justice. He views her compliance as a certainty and the price that she is willing to accept for it as negotiable. In contrast to this, Anna's response to Gabby's ordeal is to fight back using the justice system. As a woman and a lawyer, Anna views laying charges of rape against Gabby's boss as a certainty and Gabby's comfort with the process as the only uncertain factor. Anna invites Gabby to stay at her home so that she does not have to return to her house alone and further offers Gabby emotional support and protection. When she discovers that Aaron is attempting to bribe Gabby and deny her justice, Anna aggressively confronts him and Luthando in defence of Gabby's rights. Feeling that Gabby is being manipulated or coerced, she insists that Gabby separate herself from the men in order to make her decision in isolation. Gabby is confused and torn and is at times responsive and at other times unresponsive to both Aaron and Anna's attempts to convince her of their point of view. This further frustrates both parties and intensifies their efforts to protect her by forcing their position onto her.

Luthando does not know Gabby and thus has no sympathy for her in response to her victimisation beyond the actions required by his position in the political party. However, Luthando does demonstrate signs throughout the play that he does personally know victims of crime. His response to these incidents is uninterested acceptance; from his point of view, crime is a necessary and inevitable evil in the new South Africa and emotional responses to it are frivolous.

The character, David Cohen, in *Brothers in Blood* represents the middle-class approach of gentrifying neighbourhoods against 'outsiders', and Lionel Fredericks represents the frustrated residents of neighbourhoods where gangsters operate with impunity. Cohen is a young husband and father who fears for his family's safety after a hearing of an attack upon his son's school bus. Encouraged by the other parents' concerns for safety he involves himself in community safety operations which leads him to reluctantly join the neighbourhood watch. Cohen is presented as being a liberal and a peaceful man, but he is also shown to be easily driven to violence by his fear and insecurity. Fredericks, on the other hand, is frustrated with the way that gangsters are terrorising his neighbourhood. At the beginning of the play he feels powerless and disenfranchised about the violence and crime in his surroundings. As a minister, his congregants look to him for guidance and encouragement, but he is despondent about the situation himself. Throughout the play, reference is made to the PAGAD bombings and attacks on suspected gangsters and drug dealers. While these violent vigilante actions scare the other characters, Fredericks finds them to be inspiring and motivates his congregation to emulate the efforts of PAGAD under the auspices of their own

religion. He calls for them to take up arms and take a stand for their beliefs and rights. Abrahams' response to the death of his wife and son as a result of gang activity in their neighbourhood is two-fold. He first becomes more conservative and strict with his remaining child, Leila; and he decides to look for a new home in an affluent suburb to escape the criminality in his neighbourhood.

In *Some Mother's Sons* a responding reaction is the catalyst to the action of the play. In the present-day interview, Vusi comes to Braam's aid as a reaction to his falling victim to - and being the perpetrator of - violent crimes. Braam has denied Vusi (and the other partners at their law firm) the opportunity to defend him as he feels hopelessness following the loss of his wife and unborn child. Vusi, however, is compelled to come to his friend's assistance in response to hearing of his unfortunate victimisation. Vusi also realises, however, that as the unrepentant perpetrator of a violent crime, Braam's chances of being released from prison are minimal and he feels further compelled to rescue him.

In the flashbacks to the interview of the past, Braam arrives to defend Vusi after being persuaded to do so by Vusi's mother, who works at the same law firm that he does as the tea lady. Vusi's mother has an extreme responding reaction to his crimes and incarceration and in her desperation begs members of the law firm that she works at to intervene in her son's case. Having lost his mother at a young age to breast cancer, Braam is the most susceptible to her pleas and thus, despite his lack of experience, he chooses to defend Vusi.

In *Armed Response*, Anna's reaction to her neighbours' conversations about crime in their neighbourhood is to dismiss their stories as exaggerations of the real risk of victimisation in their area. The neighbours, Lerato and Brenda, seemingly gather regularly to discuss the latest reported incidents of crime in their area over tea. Anna is invited over as the new neighbour and is warned of the dangers of living in Johannesburg by Lerato and Brenda. They believe her to be naïve about the crime wave and need for more stringent personal protection strategies and measures. Their response to reports of crime is to gather and disseminate information pertaining to victimisation in their social circles and neighbourhood. They believe that they are protecting one another in so doing, but it is also evident that these tea time gatherings have an element of gossip and sensationalism about them. Anna recognises this and, in response, dismisses the danger that they are reporting to.

Later on in the play, as Anna becomes the victim of assaults and reports this to her neighbours, their response is to become increasingly practical; they invest more money in the private security provided by the Armed Response Company and reduce their social interactions. They also begin to avoid Anna, as she is seen as someone who is luring criminality into their area and encouraging it by refusing to purchase private security from

Armed Response. She is literally the only one in the neighbourhood who is not represented by Armed Response and this is, incidentally, why she is being targeted. However, Lerato and Brenda fail to realise that Anna is being attacked by members of the private security company rather than criminals, as they suspect.

The entire play, *Other People's Lives*, centres on the various responses by characters to an initial criminal act. After discovering his neighbour, Claire, brutally assaulted and dying on the stairs of their apartment building, Larry is haunted by his need and inability to save her. His wife Meg's lack of empathy and remorse for Claire's ordeal also changes his relationship with her permanently, which leads to their divorce. Meg's response to hearing of Claire's injuries is to ignore the news and distance herself emotionally from her neighbours. In the build up to the assault, Claire argues with her partner, Jane, about the reports of attacks on lesbians in the townships. Claire, a former resident of the townships, feels scared to leave her home because she is recognised as a lesbian in her former neighbourhood and knows some of the victims personally. Jane, however, has never experienced violent crime nor knows anyone who has experienced violent crime and thinks that Claire is overreacting to the unconfirmed reports. In her opinion, these incidents only occur to lesbians in those areas far removed from their suburban lives. Jane is thus not troubled in response to hearing of the rise in attacks on lesbians, whereas Claire is deeply disturbed and changes her behaviour in an attempt to protect herself from potential victimisation.

In the play *Relativity: Township Stories* Thabo's predatory behaviour is presented as the result of being the victim of sexual assault as a child. In the final scene he tells his father: "You tore my soul apart! And now I can't deal with the memories, I can't deal with the demons that are in my heart! And to deal with them, I go and kill...I rape and kill people..." (Grootboom & Chweneyagae, 2009: 54). The trauma that he experiences as a child of being molested by his father causes him to develop anti-social and violent behaviour. He is reclusive and, before being approached by Mamiki and Thuli in the tavern, for the most part keeps to himself. Much like his father, Rocks, he has a violent temper and is quick to resort to violence to resolve conflict situations. For example, when he is confronted by Thuli's boyfriend Mavarara and threatened with a gun, he attacks Mavarara (despite having sustained an accidental gunshot wound) and kills him. Furthermore, when Mamiki jealously insists that he stop seeing Thuli or risk having her sent away to relatives in Limpopo Province, he tolerates her advances for a short time before strangling her to death. Finally, when Molomo finds him strangling his father to death, he shoots the detective and then checks to see if he has survived before shooting him again. The only other person that is made aware of Mamiki's murder is her daughter Thuli, whose response is to run away from Thabo and flee the scene. However, one of Thabo's lines at the end of an earlier scene

suggests that Thuli and Thabo continue their relationship despite her mother's murder. Following Mavarara's murder he says, "From then on, Thuli and I, we shared a very deep, dark secret . . . It was a secret bond that would keep us together forever . . . Yes – we stayed together, even after what happened later" (Grootboom & Chweneyagae, 2009: 47).

There are several responses to the police brutality in the play, which is largely being perpetrated by Rocks, the lead detective with the violent disposition. Molomo, his partner, and Miss Nkhatho, the forensic profiler, constantly try to dissuade Rocks from using violence to get information from witnesses and suspects alike, but he manages to incorporate excessive levels of violence into every interaction related to the case. The first case of police brutality occurs when petty criminal Dario (Matlakala's boyfriend) is arrested under suspicion of being the serial killer and is tortured to try and elicit a confession. Molomo and Rocks punch Dario and burn his genitals with a cigarette lighter. In response to this, the already violent and volatile Dario becomes even more controlling and aggressive towards his pregnant girlfriend, Matlakala and his various other girlfriends. When Matlakala defies his control and socialises with her friends, he publicly beats her, both to punish and to embarrass her. Her response to his abusive behaviour is to get an abortion. After her father's attempts to rescue her from Dario's influence fail, he hires a hitman to kill him. The second case of police brutality is when Rocks becomes aggressive with Mamiki while interviewing her about the serial killings and strangles her. The other characters present, namely Molomo and Miss Nkhatho, are shocked by his extreme response to Mamiki's insults, but do not have much of a response beyond persuading him to release her. Mamiki is angered, but takes no action against the police officers besides telling them to leave. Following the attack, she does not alter her behaviour in response to her victimisation or potential re-victimisation and the police officers do not address Rocks' violent outbursts nor do they return to the tavern as part of their investigation.

In the play *Bullets over Bishop Lavis* Malaysia changes her entire personality after the devastating, sudden, and senseless murder of her young son resulting from a stray bullet. The play is set a decade after his murder, but Malaysia still conducts herself like a woman in mourning. She is withdrawn and reserved in the company of Ronnie, Arnel and Jerome, all of whom she is intimately acquainted with. Her body language is closed off and downcast and she is visibly uncomfortable with discussing any aspects of their shared past in Bishop Lavis. She also comes across as a very unconfident person, except when discussing Arnel's story with her. There is warmth to their bond that, despite her anger over Ronnie leaving her for Arnel, constantly creeps into their interactions throughout the play. Arnel views Malaysia as a heroine and a survivor and admires her greatly. Her positive perception of Malaysia improves Malaysia's perception of herself. Despite the negative effects on her demeanour

and personality, Malaysia remains living in Bishop Lavis after the death of her son and does not intentionally alter her social behaviour in response to the potential risk of herself being the victim of a similar incident.

Arnel - partly because she is an investigative journalist and partly because she has herself never fallen victim to interpersonal or violent crime - is fascinated by Malaysia and the work that she does at the rehabilitation clinic with victims of violent crime. She is curious about their experiences and how their victimisation affects their lives. As a middle-class resident of South Africa, she is also fascinated that none of the victims choose to leave Bishop Lavis after being violently attacked there. Ronnie also grew up in Bishop Lavis and to her knowledge was always desperate to leave as soon as he could. However, what appears to be a desire to flee resulting from a fear of potential victimisation in the gang infested area is, in fact, Ronnie's attempt to better his life and escape the shame of his past mistake. His response is not that of someone who has heard of a crime being committed against a loved one, but rather that of a guilty perpetrator of crime. The fact that his attitude towards violence in Bishop Lavis is so incongruous with those of the other residents that Arnel meets in her research at the rehabilitation clinic through Malaysia sparks her curiosity, leading her to interrogate her husband's motivations and strong feelings against Bishop Lavis. Her curiosity in the face of Ronnie and Jerome's secretiveness and Malaysia's reluctance to reminisce on the past creates much of the conflict and tension in the play.

In the flashbacks to the past, Jerome is increasingly motivated to join the struggle against apartheid after hearing of the injustices acquaintances have suffered at the hands of the SAP. As reports of escalating violence reach him, he is increasingly motivated to take up the cause. He tells Ronnie at some point that he is not intelligent enough to succeed at school like Ronnie and views the anti-apartheid struggle as his way to make a difference in the world.

Tshepang features several responding reactions to the violent crimes discussed in the play. There are also several abuses that are classified as crimes, which are not taken by the characters to be criminal or wrong and therefore avoid causing the kind of reactions discussed in this section that are commonly associated with a level of exposure to criminal acts. Simon responds to the brutal beating of his childhood friend, Alfred, by creating and escaping to a fantasy world based on images of the nativity and the coming of a messiah. It is Simon's mother who takes Alfred to the hospital and continues to nurse him back to health following his ordeal and, with his friend being temporarily integrated into his family unit; Simon attempts to comfort Alfred in his trauma. His naïve response to Alfred's trauma is to call on the promise of biblical salvation from their hopeless environment.

SIMON: But Jesus will save all the children, Anna told us in Sunday School.

ALFRED: Jesus has forgotten us.

SIMON: Maybe he has a sister; maybe she will save us.

I don't know what made me think of it, it just popped into my head. Jesus's sister. I felt happy the whole day thinking about it. Jesus's sister was going to ride through the streets of our village on a donkey, and give all the kids plenty of sweets, and everyone would be happy, Every child would have sweets and a mother and a father (Foot Newton, 2005: 30)

Alfred's response to being brutally beaten is not really discussed beyond his statement to Simon following the attack: "I don't want to be a children any more" (Foot Newton, 2005: 30). It is implied that his violent behaviour as an adult when Ruth is his girlfriend is the result of his childhood victimisation. The responding reactions to the rape of baby Tshepang vary amongst the community members. The initial reaction of the villagers who found the baby in the field is stunned disbelief or shock. "None of us could move. We were like Lot's wife. We had been turned into salt. [...] None of us said a word. [...] We stood, bags of salt. [...] No one said anything, no one moved. It was like we were in church. We stood at our altar" (Foot Newton, 2005: 36). After Tshepang is taken to the hospital and the news media descend on the town the villagers start debating the potential causes of the crime (a reacting response) and soak up the unfamiliar attention that their town's sudden notoriety has afforded them. When it is revealed that Alfred is responsible for the crime, the villagers turn on Ruth and banish her (along with Simon) from the village.

Ruth's response when the assault is first reported to her by Sarah (who had discovered Alfred in the process of raping the baby, but not intervened in any way), is to get into a drunken physical altercation with her over this information. When she is later informed of the crime once again, after sobering up, baby Tshepang has already been taken to the specialist hospital, removed from her care and taken into protective custody. She is told that the intention is to reintegrate Tshepang into the community and return her to Ruth at some stage, but it is not confirmed that this will happen. Ruth is initially afraid of Alfred, but after evidence reveals that the six suspects accused of the crime were not involved in any way, she reports Alfred's guilt to the police. Her response to the assault on her child, her ostracism by the community and the abandonment by Tshepang and Alfred, is to mutilate her body and seemingly attempt suicide. Simon discovers her and takes her to the hospital and after she recovers and returns to the village, she is left with very little recourse but to await the return of her child.

In *Reach*, Foot Newton explores the responding reactions to the violent death of Marion's son, Jonathan. Marion's daughter, Anne, responds to her brother's death by viewing South African society as inherently violent and inescapably criminalised. Fearing for her safety and that of her family she immigrates with them to Australia to rebuild their lives there. Frank, Marion's husband, struggles to come to terms with Jonathan's death and finds living in the same house that they raised their children in and the same area where their son was brutally murdered unbearable. He divorces Marion and moves on to another area, leaving Marion alone and isolated in her grief.

SOLOMON: You never talk much about your husband. Are you divorced?

MARION: Yes, six years ago. After ... Jonathan, there was no reason to stay together. We couldn't bear to even look at each other anymore. It's a shame; he wasn't a bad husband, old Frank, but he was always quite a weak man (Foot Newton, 2009: 59).

Marion resigns herself to rounding out her life in the place she has called home for most of her life. She is aware of her vulnerability as an elderly woman living in a potentially violent and isolated area by herself; however she does not seem to fear being killed in her home even when she mistakes Solomon for a stranger that has come into her home for that exact purpose. She is saddened by her son's death, but refuses to leave or change her lifestyle in response to it in the same way that Anne and Frank choose to.

In *The Three Little Pigs*, the catalyst for the play's action is the discovery that the pig brothers have been killed. The Poultry Authority and Pig Squad are shocked and frightened by the rash killing of their fellow law enforcement officers, and everyone in these organisations is notably agitated by the news of this crime. The investigation into the brothers' deaths is thus made a priority action and Doberman and Vark are placed under considerable pressure by their peers to find answers quickly so that arrests can be made and the safety of police officers can be re-established. The little pig (the one left alive) is paranoid following his brother's murders and goes about investigating their deaths in a cautious and secretive manner, dodging Doberman and Vark as they conduct their official investigation. Surprisingly, the other characters are largely relieved or excited to hear that the pig brothers have been killed and testify in their interviews that the brothers were involved in corrupt activities and used corrupt methods to conduct their investigations. Bunsy, Sparkles and the hyenas all report some form of abuse of authority on the part of the pig brothers and their testimonies suggest that the brothers may have been more involved in criminal activities than in investigating them. The various characters' differing responding

reactions to the murders are what drives the action of the play and creates the suspense around the need to uncover what actually happened; who the 'good guys' are and who the 'bad guys' are in the story.

4.3.3. Theatrical engagement with the *reacting* response to crime

Green Man Flashing, *Other People's Lives*, *Bullets over Bishop Lavis*, *Tshepang*, *The Three Little Pigs* and *iSystem* are listed as plays reflecting a *reacting* experience of crime and it is no coincidence that all involve third-party reporting of story elements that exist beyond the view of the audience. The performers in these moments are no longer 'showing', but 'telling, the audience' what happened. A recorded video of Gabby snaps up onto a screen at certain key points in *Green Man Flashing* and her image informs the audience about certain events that occur beyond the worlds explored by the set. In *Other People's Lives* Meg recites the narrative she told herself about what happened on that fateful night as a form of comfort. She then tries to convince Larry that it is the truth in order to make her version of events stronger; however, he is insistent on remembering the incident as it happened as opposed to keeping track of lies in order to feel more at ease. *Bullets over Bishop Lavis* similarly features several reported versions of the same story, until Malaysia eventually breaks down out of frustration and demands a single explanation for the events that killed her child. *Tshepang* relies on a third-party narrator repeating the details of a crime that he was not involved with, but that he knows of through his intimate relationship with the baby's mother and family. He can only share the few random pieces of information from various sources and comment on the conclusions he has managed to draw from the little that he knows. He is therefore reporting his own version of events having achieved some emotional (albeit not physical) distance from the criminal act. *The Three Little Pigs* and *iSystem* are both about internal police investigations designed to uncover the truth behind multiple reports and statements relating to criminal behaviour on the part of police officers. In *The Three Little Pigs* the detectives struggle to make sense of the conflicting and incomplete reports and it is for this reason they call in all of the people involved with the case and interrogate their statements with them. The play, like *iSystem* is intentionally about the *reacting* experience of crime and how prone it is to individual opinion and mistakes in recording information. This can often result in a misreporting of facts, incomplete reporting of facts or no facts being reported at all, leaving those interpreting this response without much to form an opinion or response around. In *iSystem* there is a deliberate withholding of information between those that had an *initial* response to the crime (Sergeant Solomon, Inspector Dickson and Fiekie the informant) and those that are trying to form a *reacting* experience of the crime (Captain Vezakhe and Inspector Khuzwayo). The officers concerned are dodging the investigations

and trying to avoid answering questions which only increases the audiences' suspicions of their intentions.

It has therefore been demonstrated that when it comes to creating theatre about the criminalised condition of South African society, many theatre-makers/plays have focussed on *responding* reactions. *Initial* responses are better suited to plays in the action genre, as the emphasis in these productions is on the realistic simulations of interpersonal crime. *Reacting* responses are ideal for plays in the suspense genre, as they match the themes of uncovering truths and hidden evidence very well. All of these devices suit the themes, genre and subject of the plays that they are used in. It cannot be said that depicting one response is superior to another as each has its purpose. However, this study is particularly concerned with the personal experiences that people have living in a criminalised society and is therefore less interested in the suspense and action genres if they do not in some way reflect these experiences.

4.4 Emotional and behavioural responses associated with fear of crime

Fear of crime and insecurity are often associated with certain recognised emotional responses and behavioural modifications, as discussed in Chapter Two. The previous section explored how perceptions of crime are based on the level of exposure to crime; in other words, the level of trauma experienced is less for those with lesser exposure to the criminal act, making it easier for them to remain unaffected by it. However, it is evident from this section that the behavioural response to their perceptions is not always entirely dependent on their level of exposure to crime, but rather on a combination of factors. This next section will shift the focus on fear of crime to explore how the selected plays have considered the emotional responses and behavioural modifications associated with fear of crime.

As outlined in Chapter One, the themes that the selected plays are grouped according to are based on the range of emotional/psychological responses that people have been observed to have when living with the constant threat of becoming victims of criminality, such as: fear (with potential reactions ranging from paranoia to migration) and its secondary emotion insecurity (with potential reactions ranging from helplessness to an obsession with security measures); frustration (with potential reactions like disillusionment and emigration) and its secondary emotion anger (with potential reactions of bitterness, criminality and vigilantism); and hope that things will improve together with an acceptance that criminality is an inevitable feature of life in South Africa.

These experiences and subsequent behaviour modifications are re-enacted as the feelings and actions of characters in theatre productions, as well as referred to as themes in a play. The eleven plays selected for this study are organised according to these potential responses as themes and/or staged actions as represented in Fig. 4:

Fear Paranoia	Fear Migration	Insecurity Helplessness	Insecurity Security	Frustration Disillusionment	Frustration Emigration	Anger Criminality	Anger Vigilantism	Anger Bitterness	Hope Stick it out	Acceptance
Green Man Flashing		Green Man Flashing		Green Man Flashing	Green Man Flashing	Green Man Flashing		Green Man Flashing	Green Man Flashing	
		Tshepang		Tshepang				Tshepang		Tshepang
		Some Mother's Sons	Some Mother's Sons				Some Mother's Sons		Some Mother's Sons	
						Relativity: Township Stories				Relativity: Township Stories
Armed Response			Armed Response				Armed Response		Armed Response	
				Reach					Reach	Reach
	Brothers in Blood			Brothers in Blood			Brothers in Blood	Brothers in Blood		
Other People's Lives	Other People's Lives			Other People's Lives				Other People's Lives	Other People's Lives	Other People's Lives
	Bullets over Bishop Lavis			Bullets over Bishop Lavis		Bullets over Bishop Lavis		Bullets over Bishop Lavis		Bullets over Bishop Lavis
		The Three Little Pigs		The Three Little Pigs		The Three Little Pigs				
			iSystem	iSystem		iSystem	iSystem	iSystem		iSystem

Figure 4: The plays according to their exploration of emotional reactions and secondary responses to living in a criminalised society

As can be observed above, the secondary responses of anger, hope and acceptance prove to be the most prevalent, whereas the primary responses (which are more commonly experienced in a criminalised society than the secondary responses) are marginally less represented. The active responses are more prevalent in the selected plays than the passive responses.

4.4.1 Fear - paranoia

This category refers to fear in an irrational form (refer to definition in Chapter Two, section 2.4) and is typified by behaviour in which the feeling of fear overwhelms the subject to the extent that they freeze and are unable to act in response to the thing that is causing their fear.⁶⁶ In *Green Man Flashing* Gabby's initial response to the trauma of being the victim of a sexual assault is to emotionally shut down. She is overcome with a kind of inertia that frustrates Anna, who would rather she had a more active response like anger which would inspire her to take action against her rapist. Gabby is torn between her loyalty to her boss, whose political work is very important to South Africa and the struggle for freedom that she was a part of in exile, and her own pain. She fears the prospect of returning to work, which following the death of her son is what she considers to be her purpose in life, but she also fears that prosecuting her boss (the party's preferred candidate for president) will potentially have adverse effects on the development of South African society at large. As such, until the third option of the plea deal that allows her to emigrate to Australia appears, she is caught in limbo between the two terrifying prospects and is unable to make a decision about what to do.

In *Armed Response* Anna and her neighbours are all fearful of their potential victimisation, but to various extents. At first, Anna views the fear expressed by her neighbours as paranoia, but their fear is later revealed to be a rational response to the criminality in the area that is being orchestrated by their private security company, Armed Response. After falling victim to several home invasions and assaults, Anna becomes paranoid and implements personal security measures including installing bars over her windows and avoiding leaving her house entirely. Anna is a photographer whose intention in coming to South Africa was to capture images of life around Johannesburg, but her fear of victimisation prevents her from fulfilling this purpose as she is too terrified to explore the city or even leave her home. In response to Anna's victimisation, her neighbours respond with increasingly paranoid behaviour, becoming too afraid of potential victimisation to even associate with her. They stop inviting her to their coffee meetings, then stop having them all together, and finally refuse Anna's invitations to come over to her house. By the end of the

⁶⁶ The rational response to fear is identified as being the 'fight or flight' response, which refers to the subject either fighting to defend themselves from the perceived danger or fleeing from the perceived danger.

play the impression is that of a neighbourhood fortified in their homes against the threat of the criminalised society.

In *Other People's Lives* Meg is most paranoid about the threat of violent crime. She increasingly refuses to leave her flat and avoids contact with her neighbours in the corridors and elevator of their apartment building at all costs. Her belief is that if she keeps to herself, the crime will remain outside with 'the other people'.

4.4.2 Fear - migration

This category refers to instances when fear of crime leads characters to attempt to move to neighbourhoods that are deemed to be safer or where their risk of potential victimisation might be lower. The most overt example of this is in *Brothers in Blood* when Abrahams goes to the affluent neighbourhood where Cohen serves on the neighbourhood watch to find a home for sale that he can move himself and his daughter Leila into. Cohen's account of how he came to spot Abrahams in the neighbourhood suggests that it has advanced private security measures, including camera surveillance and a resourced neighbourhood watch (Cohen is supplied with a location to take Abrahams to in order to interrogate him.)

In *Other People's Lives* Claire has left the townships where lesbians are being targeted by violent individuals wishing to punish them for their sexual orientation and moved in with her partner, Jane, into an apartment building in what is understood to be a safer area of the city centre. Despite being removed from her previous environment, Claire is still extremely afraid for herself and Jane, as she believes that the violence could follow her wherever she goes or that it will spread out of the township and into other areas. She tries to persuade Jane to move once again with her to another area further away from people that know them, but Jane is unpersuaded that they are in any danger and refuses to leave. Claire's desired behaviour modification appears to have been a prudent one, however, as she falls victim to a homophobic assault outside of their apartment building.

In *Bullets over Bishop Lavis* it is Ronnie who is determined to leave the violence and gangsterism of Bishop Lavis; however, Malaysia and Jerome do not experience fear of the criminality to the extent that they would want to leave. In fact, both can be seen as being involved in neighbourhood upliftment activities; Jerome joins the struggle against apartheid as his contribution to improving life for residents of the area and Malaysia is a nurse working with victims of crime in the neighbourhood at the local rehabilitation clinic. Ronnie's desire to migrate, however, is only due in part to his fear of crime. His other motivation to escape Bishop Lavis is his guilt over firing the shot that killed Malaysia's young son.

4.4.3 Insecurity - helplessness

This category refers to those characters whose feelings of insecurity have them feeling helpless and experiencing an inability to act similar to that described in relation to paranoia. Those experiencing paranoia are too afraid to act, but those feeling helplessness are too disillusioned to act. In *Green Man Flashing* this is reflected by the character of Aaron, whose response to the random death of his son seems strangely muted to his friends and loved ones. Aaron's behaviour following this crime is to carry on with life without much disruption, which disturbs his wife Gabby sufficiently for her to file for divorce. During their reunion Aaron explains his motivation for minimising his response as being in order to project strength and stability in order to provide Gabby with the emotional support that she needed under the circumstances. Another character expressing this response is Luthando who, having lost numerous friends and family members to violence (both as a result of the political violence of apartheid and the criminal violence of post-apartheid South Africa) views the risk of victimisation as an inevitable aspect of society and that there is nothing to be done about it.

Ruth's aimless wandering around in the play *Tshepang* typifies the response identified as helplessness. She was unable to protect her baby from being raped and with Tshepang in the care of doctors at the hospital in the next town, she is also unable to help her baby beyond what is already being done for her. Her options of recourse are limited and she has nothing specific to do or get busy with, as she is unemployed and has no family besides Tshepang. Her situation fraught with helplessness and guilt; an alcoholic, Ruth left Tshepang unattended to find alcohol, inadvertently providing the rapist (her boyfriend) with unfettered access to the infant. Added to that is the fact that when Tshepang was discovered after the assault in need of urgent medical care, Ruth was too drunk to take cognisance of her daughter's condition, let alone do anything about it. Neighbours had to alert the authorities and seek medical care for the child. Ruth was unable to help Tshepang who was a helpless victim, but it is Ruth's behaviour during the play (which depicts the aftermath of Tshepang's rape) that demonstrates feelings of helplessness in response to criminality.

In *Some Mother's Sons*, Braam's sense of futility and his lack of interest in being helped in any way deters Vusi's attempts to repay him the debt of legal assistance in the midst of his incarceration. After killing the men responsible for the death of his wife and unborn child, Braam becomes disillusioned with the criminalised nature of South African society and his place in it. He views his revenge attack as a failure because it has failed to bring his loved ones back and it has not given him the reprieve from his sadness, anger, and grief that he had hoped it would; he was helpless to save his family and despite achieving vengeance, his

feelings of helplessness remain. By the time Vusi arrives to help him out of prison, he is completely uninterested in his fate and appears to be unwilling to support Vusi's efforts to secure his freedom.

In *The Three Little Pigs*, the little pig seems to be hyper-vigilant of his risk of victimisation following the deaths of his brothers. The other characters involved in the case, namely Sparkles, Bunsy and the hyenas, are also afraid following the murders, but do not change their behavioural responses towards the police. However, the little pig suspects that other police officers may have been responsible for the murders, and as a Pig Force officer himself, is particularly afraid of the Dog Squad's interest in the case his brothers were killed for. He cannot act on his insecurity, however, as he needs to use the Dog Squad's interrogations to gather as much information as he can about what their investigation has managed to uncover about the murders in order to advance his own personal investigation. He also cannot avoid the places that his brothers went to or the people that they interacted with, as he needs to retrace their steps in order to uncover whether or not he is similarly at risk, what happened to his brothers, and who is responsible. He is helpless to actively avoid the threatening circumstances causing his insecurity until he has more information and has to therefore put himself in harm's way to improve his security.

4.4.4 Insecurity - security

This category describes a response to insecurity of hyper-vigilance and increased interest in private security measures, which includes purchasing increased self-defence measures and engaging in behavioural modifications associated with improving personal safety. In *Some Mother's Sons* it is Braam and his wife who engage in the process of improving their private security measures in response to their feelings of insecurity in the criminalised society following several burglaries at their home. At first their feelings of safety are not greatly affected by being burgled, as they are not home when the crimes took place and did not suffer any personal injury. However, when they are burgled while at home in their beds, having invested in improved security measures, their feelings of security are drastically heightened and they migrate to a safer area and Braam purchases a gun.

As has been discussed, in *Armed Response* Anna's paranoia leads to hyper-vigilance and this hyper-vigilance leads her to take greater security measures. These include altering her behaviour and adding bars to her windows and locks to her doors.

iSystem, as a drama involving police officers and set inside a police station, does not explore insecurity as it is experienced by the average citizen, as police officers are trained to defend themselves from criminals and carry firearms at all times. However, Captain Vezakhe does

order additional protection details for Solomon and Dickson after their raid of the drug dealers suspected of killing a fellow officer and organising the car accident that killed Solomon's pregnant girlfriend failed to secure the arrests of the leaders of the organisation. As Nomsa's investigation uncovers an increasing number of discrepancies in Solomon and Dickson's investigation and involvement in the raid, Vezakhe assumes that this indicates an increased risk to Solomon and Dickson and orders increasing security measures to protect them.

4.4.5 Frustration - disillusionment

This category refers to behaviour based on fear or insecurity that has been experienced (without alleviation) for a sufficient length of time for the individual to feel frustrated with the lack of change in their situation. Much like the helplessness experienced in response to insecurity, this disillusionment can be attributed to those who have given up hope that their perceived risk of potential victimisation will ever improve and that victims of crime (whether themselves or someone they know) will likely never receive justice. From this perspective, South African society is inherently criminalised and there is nothing that law enforcement and the justice system can, or will, do about it. Victimisation is inevitable and there is nothing that can be done about it.

Gabby and Aaron, in *Green Man Flashing*, can be said to be suffering from this disillusionment following the unsolved murder of their son. Aaron is motivated to help Gabby by getting her the best deal possible from the party, which he believes is her best recourse at justice. While Luthando and the rest of the party members are motivated by the desire to protect the political career of her boss, Aaron's motivation for trying to persuade Gabby to take a plea deal is influenced by his disillusionment with the criminal justice system. Aaron views Anna's attempts to persuade Gabby to seek recourse from the justice system as a waste of time and his attempts to secure her a favourable plea deal to be the only real form of justice available in the criminalised society. Gabby acknowledges the best intentions of Anna and Inspector Abrahams to help her, but is sceptical of how effective their efforts will be. Firstly, her boss is a very politically connected and influential person and is likely to have much stronger legal representation than she could secure, despite Anna's best intentions to successfully fight her case on her behalf. Secondly, despite Inspector Abrahams' best intentions and best efforts in the investigation of her son's murder, he ultimately failed and she has witnessed first-hand that the best police work does not always lead to the apprehension of suspects or the prosecution of perpetrators. Finally, she is afraid that by publically accusing her boss of rape she is going to be accused of bringing their political movement into disrepute, ostracizing her from her remaining friends and colleagues.

Seeking justice, from her perspective, appears as if it will cause her more personal suffering and loss than her choosing not to seek justice from the conventional sources.

In *Tshepang*, the narrator, Simon, has a disillusioned perspective of the criminalised state of his community. While he is desperate to be able to do something to help Ruth and Tshepang and alleviate the pain of their experiences, he presents their ordeal as being an inevitable combination of elements symptomatic of their environment. Despite the fact that Tshepang means 'hope', Simon does not offer the audience any hopeful indications that her horrific assault will be a freak occurrence unlikely to ever happen in the same locale again. In this sense, his feelings about the crime come across as being resigned disillusionment.

Marion in *Reach* is the most overt example of a disillusioned individual out of the eleven plays. After years without a resolution to her son's murder which has remained unsolved, Marion views society as being irredeemably criminalised and, before the intrusion of Solomon into her life, she believes that as an old woman who is alone and vulnerable that she will inevitably fall victim to a violent crime. When Solomon brings her groceries her first assumption is that he stole them. She has a cynical perception of the criminal nature of society and imagines crime into circumstances where none need have occurred.

The elders, Abrahams and Fredericks, in *Brothers in Blood* are the most disillusioned out of the five characters in the play. However, their frustrations lead them to have more active responses than is suggested by those suffering from disillusionment.

In *Other People's Lives*, the cynical Meg is the most disillusioned by the criminalised nature of South African society, despite being the character with the least interactions with the society beyond the confines of her apartment. She mentions being the victim of what she describes as petty crimes on more than one occasion and views her re-victimisation as inevitable.

In *Bullets over Bishop Lavis*, Malaysia demonstrates feelings of disillusionment with her experience of the criminalised society. She has resigned herself to the fact that Bishop Lavis is overrun with gangsters and gang violence and that there is nothing to be done by ordinary citizens but to get on with their lives as best as they can. Despite being the victim of a tragic violent crime, Malaysia does not see the need to try to leave Bishop Lavis. Ronnie can also be seen as being disillusioned; his perception of the criminalised society is that it is a valuable way for him to make money as a criminal attorney and that it is endemic of certain communities and not of others. He is resigned to his position within the criminalised society and is not interested in doing anything (like Jerome and Arnel would want him to) about what

happens in neighbourhoods that are more affected by the criminalised society than his, namely Bishop Lavis.

In *The Three Little Pigs*, the little pig is disillusioned with the justice system and perceives the criminalised nature of society to be beyond the capacity of the police to address. He is taking action in the case of the murders of his brothers, primarily because he does not believe that the Dog Squad or any other law enforcement agency will be able to achieve justice or keep him safe from the criminals responsible.

In *iSystem*, Dickson has a disillusioned perception of the criminalised society. Both his mother and his little sister struggle with addiction which has led to criminal behaviour. His mother is an alcoholic who has been involved in questionable activities throughout his life to the point that he is scared to move out of her house for fear of what she might do if she is left without his supervision. His sister is a drug addict who he identifies as being willing to do anything for drugs. She has just returned from serving a prison term for criminal activities related to her drug use. At one point he laments their efforts to take drug dealers off of the streets while his own family takes advantage of his absence to get and use drugs. Despite his work as a police officer, he views the criminalised society as an endless cycle that will perpetuate without abatement despite what they as police officers do.

4.4.6 Frustration - emigration

This category refers to feelings of frustration with the criminalised nature of society and the inability to do anything to effectively alleviate the risk of potential victimisation that lead individuals to view migration to another country as their only chance at freedom from constant fear and insecurity. Out of the eleven plays in this study, *Green Man Flashing* is the only one where a character actually responds to the criminalised society in this way. Emigration is spoken about in some of the plays, like *Reach* and *Some Mother's Sons*, but it is not viewed as a legitimate option to the characters discussing potential responses to their experiences of living in the criminalised society. In *Green Man Flashing*, Gabby makes the decision to take the plea deal when she is offered the chance to move to Australia to represent the government as part of the Foreign Service. She cites her frustration with the criminalised nature of South African society and her inability to alleviate her unease caused by her traumatic experiences of criminality as her reasons for needing to leave the country. In a sense, it could be said that her frustrated disillusionment lead to her frustrated decision to emigrate when offered the opportunity to leave South Africa.

4.4.7 Anger – criminality

The following two categories refer to anger that has evolved out of frustration at living in the criminalised society. Anger is an active emotion and a secondary emotion in response to a primary emotion such as frustration or fear. In both categories this anger has led to violent criminal behaviour; 'criminality' refers to deviant behaviour associated with attempt to have needs and desires met (such as the need to steal to have food) and 'vigilantism' refers to deviant behaviour associated with the private pursuit of justice or personal security within a criminalised society.

In *Green Man Flashing* Gabby, already disillusioned with the efficacy of the legal system and frustrated with the unwelcome and threatening presence of Luthando in her house, shoots him with Aaron's gun. This cannot be said to be a crime of passion, despite the fact that she is under significant emotional strain, as she takes the gun several scenes before the opportunity to shoot Luthando presents itself when Aaron goes outside to take a phone call. This can also not be described as vigilantism, as Luthando had not committed any crime against her nor had he harmed her. He can certainly be described as being intimidating and abrasive, but he did not pose Gabby any harm, despite his threats, as he was bound by his duty to fulfil the job that he was sent there for, which was to assist Aaron in getting her to sign the papers for the plea deal.

In *Relativity: Township Stories*, there are two instances where anger at the criminalised nature of the township has led to criminality. Firstly, Dan feels powerless to protect his daughter, Matlakala, and himself from her violent gangster boyfriend, Dario. He hires a sympathetic assassin to kill Dario, allowing Dan to reunite with Matlakala and enjoy a restored home life. Secondly, Thabo's violent behaviour is also described as being a response to his own personal anguish at being the victim of sexual abuse as a child. The various other acts of criminality cannot be described as being motivated in response to the criminalised society, as they are opportunistic crimes that are not undertaken out of anger. Dario's beating of Matlakala following his abuse at the hands of the police detectives can also be seen as criminality in response to the criminalised nature of society if it is acknowledged that the police acted outside of the purview of the law and that their behaviour is therefore seen as being criminal.

Realising he will not see justice for Ronnie's betrayal, Jerome decides in prison to take revenge on him in *Bullets over Bishop Lavis*. He brings Malaysia to Ronnie's house to have him confess his guilt in the shooting of her son to her and uses a gun pointed at Arnel's head to ensure that Ronnie reveals the truth. It is unclear whether it was his premeditated motive to do so, but Jerome shoots Ronnie despite his confession. This action cannot be viewed as vigilantism, because despite the fact that it was done in revenge for Jerome's wrongful incarceration, vigilantism is crime in retaliation for criminality that targets a group of perceived criminals rather than a single individual.

In *The Three Little Pigs* it is revealed that the little pig is the one who killed his brothers and is in fact the elusive criminal mastermind, The Big Bad Wolf that the pig brothers, Doberman, and Vark, were attempting to track down. His motivation for becoming a criminal kingpin is revealed to be his response to being bullied by his corrupt older brothers and his perception that the other police officers did not take him as seriously as they did the two older pigs. It is suggested, but not overtly stated, that his brothers' corrupt (and therefore criminal) behaviour was the result of their frustrations with what they perceived to be lawlessness and injustice within the criminal justice system.

In *iSystem*, Captain Vezakhe is in the middle of divorce proceedings after his wife found out about his affair with IPID investigator Nomsa Khuzwayo and his obsessive need to sabotage his wife's gains in the divorce leads to criminal behaviour. Despite warnings from Solomon and Nomsa, he manipulates a petty criminal and confidential informant, Fiekie, and his two loyal officers into spying on his wife in order to obtain evidence that she is having an affair which he could use against her in the divorce. This illegal activity does not serve any police investigations nor is it of any use besides his own personal gain.

4.4.8 Anger - vigilantism

As has been discussed in the previous section, vigilantism is a form of criminality that is described as being specifically motivated by a sense that it is the only recourse for injustice. In *Some Mother's Sons* the act of vigilantism is Braam's vengeance killing of the men suspected of killing his wife and unborn child in an armed house robbery.

In *Armed Response*, Anna takes the law into her own hands in response to the criminality being perpetrated by the thugs hired by the Armed Response Company. The police do not believe her claims that she is being targeted and that the crimes are not robberies or muggings (her property is not taken), but rather assaults designed to intimidate her into purchasing private security. She is dismissed as being a paranoid foreigner misinterpreting the nature of criminality South African society. She at first invests in alternative private

security measures, then modifies her behaviour to improve her personal safety, but when she is attacked again in her home, she has armed herself with a firearm to defend herself against any potential criminals.

In *Brothers in Blood* vigilantism is a central theme, with all of the characters debating the positives and negatives of the vigilante actions of PAGAD. Cohen finds the behaviour of PAGAD to be threatening, despite the irony that he belongs to a group (the neighbourhood watch) that also operates outside of the ambit of the law and occasionally uses violent means to achieve their aims, as he himself does when Abrahams refuses to co-operate with him. Abrahams, Leila and Fadiel all support the aims of PAGAD to reduce criminality and make communities safer, but are uncomfortable with the violent means that PAGAD uses to achieve their aims. Fredericks is the only character that openly supports vigilantism; however, he does not engage in any vigilante actions himself. Fadiel views his attempt to shoot Cohen, a doctor who performs abortions, as an act of vigilantism, but Cohen provides what is considered to be a legal service to women regardless of whether it is perceived to be right or wrong.

Vigilantism is discussed throughout *iSystem*, with the police officers experiencing various frustrations with the restrictions of the law and how justice is not always achieved even when a case is successfully investigated. The debate around the killing of the woman during the drug raid by a police officer concerns whether or not it was done intentionally in retaliation for the death of Solomon's girlfriend and unborn child, and the insecurity the officers families have had to live with after threats were made by the drug dealers against the families of those officers attempting to investigate them. However, there are several other instances where the police officers are seemingly comfortable with taking the law into their own hands, particularly in relation to Captain Vezakhe's divorce. Both Solomon and Dickson immediately volunteer to spend their personal time following the boyfriend of Vezakhe's wife and Vezakhe uses police resources to undermine his wife in their divorce. These actions cannot be described as being vigilante actions, as they are not in response to criminality, but they can be described as being criminal actions.

4.4.9 Anger - bitterness

This category can be described as anger that does not lead to any action being taken or a passive state of anger or bitterness over the unchanging criminalised nature of society. In *Green Man Flashing* it is Anna who is left embittered by the criminality and subsequent injustices in her life; namely the unsolved murder of Gabby and Aaron's son and the cover-up of Gabby's rape. As Gabby's friend and lawyer she is forced to carry out Gabby's wishes to accept the plea deal and cover-up Luthando's murder, but she is evidently in

disagreement with the whole process. There is no recourse available for her to act upon her anger as a result of other people's actions, so she is left with bitterness.

In *Tshepang* there is nothing that Ruth or Simon can do about the man who raped Tshepang; he has been taken beyond their physical reach by the police and the only action that they can take towards him is to see him in jail and speak to him, which would likely not satisfy their feelings of anger in any case. As a result they are also left with no way to act upon their anger, leaving them with bitterness.

In *Brothers in Blood*, Fredericks can be described as being bitter about the criminalised nature of his neighbourhood. He is angered by the death of his son and the fact that the drug dealer responsible for his sons addiction is beyond the reach of law enforcement. He does not take any action to improve or change his situation or environment other than preach to his congregation that they should undertake to form a vigilante group similar to PAGAD. He does not initiate his proposed vigilante group, nor does he take any vigilante actions himself. He is angry and wants to act upon his anger, but does not actually do so. Fadiel can also be described as being embittered by the death of his father in a xenophobic attack. His family migrated from their native Somalia to escape the violence and criminalised society there, only to fall victim to a similar form of violent criminality in South Africa. After his father's death, Fadiel is bitter towards South Africans and does not trust them. Besides associating with a few fellow Muslims in his community, he mostly keeps to himself.

In the play, *Other People's Lives*, Meg can be described as embittered. Unlike Jane, who is in a passive state of helplessness and hopelessness, Meg is in a passive state of anger. She seems to be angry at the world and not just because her environment is criminalised. Larry tries to persuade her to stop complaining and do something to change her situation; he believes that individuals have a responsibility to themselves and their fellow human beings to make their environment a safe and comfortable place to live in. Meg, however, is uninterested in her fellow human beings and any attempt to improve their environment. She is nasty in her bitterness towards society and regularly expresses her anger to the few people she interacts with, such as Larry, but besides her complaints she takes no action in response to the criminalised nature of society.

In *Bullets over Bishop Lavis*, Jerome is embittered by his prison stay and the fact his cousin, Ronnie, essentially got away with murder as a result of his decision to take the blame for the death of Malaysia's son. He emerges from prison to find that Ronnie is living a comfortable life far removed from the experiences of Malaysia – whom he views as a victim of denied justice – and the experiences that await him upon his return to society. Having been incarcerated, Jerome has an alternative perspective of the criminalised society and cannot

be described as having lived in the criminalised South Africa, as the social dynamics of the prison environment are different to that of the society it exists within. For him the criminalised society exists as the single crime that he was punished for, but for which justice was not really done. Jerome views the fact that Ronnie married Malaysia, without telling her the truth of what happened to her son, in order to atone for his guilt as a deceptive and cruel thing to do to an already victimised woman. The act of bringing the now-divorced parties together is Jerome's attempt to change his own perception that there is no justice and that individuals and communities will always be at the mercy of their criminalised environments.

Sergeant Solomon's pregnant girlfriend is killed in an alleged hit-and-run car accident in *iSystem* and he suspects that it was actually an assassination ordered by the drug dealers that he has been investigating with his partner Dickson. Despite their best efforts to gather evidence on the suspects and bring down the operations of the drug dealers in question, they simply cannot bring the case to a resolution. Solomon can be said to be acting on his anger, as he is continuing to do his job of investigating the criminals responsible; however, as this is his job and he would be expected to continue with this regardless of his personal feelings, it can be said that he is displaying bitterness regarding this particular crime beneath his outward expressions about the whole criminal enterprise.

4.4.10 Hope -stick it out

This response refers to those who are hopeful that the criminalised nature of society will improve over time and that the risk of victimisation is not a sufficient reason to feel unsafe or to modify behaviours. These individuals can be described as being aware of the risks of living in a criminalised society, as taking measures to protect themselves, but as also having an overall positive perception of criminality as being not as dangerous to individuals as the crime wave discourse seems to suggest.

In *Armed Response*, Anna's initial response to the criminalised society is positive and hopeful. It is her perception that South Africa cannot possibly be as criminalised as it is described and that the sort of people who describe it as such (in her case, her neighbours Brenda and Lerato) are gossips. She is adamant that she does not need to modify her social behaviour to include more personal safety measures in South Africa than in Germany and tries instead to explore Johannesburg with an open-minded and positive attitude.

In *Some Mother's Sons*, Braam's initial response to the criminalised society is to dismiss the criminality as ever-present, but not dangerous. He is reluctant to acquiesce to his wife's requests to improve their private security measures and move to a safer neighbourhood, as he views it as pointless and criminality as being everywhere, but not as bad as it is

described. But, his response gradually changes as the element of contact between the burglars and himself increases.

Despite losing her son to crime, Gabby in *Green Man Flashing* is still optimistic about living in South Africa until she is raped. As expatriates, Gabby and Aaron were excited to return to South Africa and their lives in their new democratic home. Aaron's excitement disappears after their son's murder, but Gabby resolves to remain positive, to contribute to societal transformation by working for a prominent politician, and to find ways of enjoying her life despite her losses.

In *Other People's Lives*, Larry remains optimistic about South African society becoming the ideal that people hope for despite witnessing a terrible crime. His response to the criminalised society is the opposite of his wife's. Meg has a negative, pessimistic view of the criminalised society and it is this constant negativity and her apathy that drive Larry to divorce her. The other residents of the apartment building do not share Larry's positive outlook besides Claire and Jane. Jane's hopeful outlook is based on her naivety; she has not had much exposure to crime or those who have been victimised by crime. After Claire is assaulted, Jane is too traumatised to leave their flat, but this is not out of fear for her own safety, but rather guilt for dismissing Claire's concerns about her safety in their neighbourhood. Without Claire and Jane, Larry's positive outlook is stifled in an environment of people with negative responses to living in the criminalised society and he moves out of the neighbourhood entirely.

4.5.11 Acceptance

Acceptance refers to the response typified by the reluctant acceptance of society as being criminalised. It is a passive response that does not require any action be taken or any behaviour be modified. Rather it refers to an attitude taken to living in a criminalised society.

For the most part, Claire in *Other People's Lives* views the criminalised nature of society as inevitable and unavoidable; however, she does modify her behaviour in response to reports of the crime that she fears the most, the attacks on lesbians. She is annoyed at Jane's denials that criminality in society is as bad as suggested, having recently moved from a neighbourhood with high levels of crime.

In *Relativity: Township Stories*, most of the characters acknowledge that their environment and society in general are criminalised and have resigned themselves to the belief that it is unlikely to change. The police officers, particularly Rocks who struggles to manage his anger, have difficulty treating their suspects and the citizens they encounter with respect and with dignity. They are seemingly always on the attack and treat everyone as though they are

a criminal. When Rocks assaults Mamiki for refusing to answer questions during an impromptu late night interview, the other officers are shocked, but do not intervene. Mamiki in this instance was not a suspect, but rather a tavern owner that the police needed information from. While it is generally understood to be counter-productive for police to threaten and assault members of the public that they need information or assistance from, the police in *Relativity: Township Stories* appear to be only slightly perturbed about Rocks pointing his gun at and choking an innocent civilian.

In *Bullets over Bishop Lavis*, Malaysia has reluctantly resigned herself to accept the criminalised nature of society having lost her young son to a stray bullet and working as a nurse in a Rehabilitation Centre for victims of the gang violence in Bishop Lavis. She is over-saturated with first-hand experience of – and with victims of – violent crime. Jerome and Arnel would have her challenge her circumstances as a victim of violent crime and have a more emotive response to the effects of the criminality in her neighbourhood on her life, but Malaysia is reluctant to undertake an active response to the criminalised society.

In *Tshepang*, while Ruth desperately takes action in response to their criminalised environment in the form of self-mutilation, Simon has accepted the nature of their community as being an inevitable result of the structural neglect in and of their town. His narrative traces their histories of interactions with violence, abuse, and neglect back to their childhoods in the same village; he humanises Alfred, the perpetrator of the rape of baby Tshepang, by telling the story of the brutal beating he received as a child at the hands of his abusive step-mother. The broomstick that is used to destroy the loaf of bread, the symbolised rape of baby Tshepang, is itself destroyed in the process and the broken pieces of it are cradled by Simon, now representing the broken body of the young Alfred. Simon's narrative suggests that, from his perspective, the criminalised nature of their society does not make it a bad or evil place, but it does make it a difficult place to live.

Chapter Five

5.1 Summary of research questions and aims

How have contemporary theatre-makers in South Africa approached staging the experiences of living in a criminalised society? How have these approaches been received by critics and audiences? To what extent has South African theatre responded sensitively or ethically to the injustices, challenges and traumas of living in a criminalised society? These were the three research questions underpinning this study. The scope of the study has proven insufficient to sufficiently address the depth and complexity of these questions. The research undertaken has demonstrated a societal problem that is more complex and dynamic than most people understand and that has several affective aspects that will need to be taken into consideration by theatre-makers intending to engage with this material.

The research aims of this study were to identify and categorise a selection of contemporary South African plays dealing with the social insecurity caused by the fear of violent personal crime and to critically analyse the audience reception of these productions in order to discover whether the theatre's representation of the experiences of living in a criminalised society reflected the real experiences of individuals. The assumption at the outset of the study was that the authenticity of these representations was most important, and that it was the sensationalising of experiences of living in a criminalised society that led to the kind of re-traumatisation of audience members that I had witnessed during performances of *6 Mins* and *Pocket Shots*. I undertook this research as an attempt to gain in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon, its effects on individuals and how theatre affected the ways in which individuals experienced the criminalised society. The immersive research that I conducted into criminology – particularly the victim surveys which revealed how various individuals responded to their victimisation and potential victimisation – had unforeseen outcomes for me as an emerging theatre-maker doing a cross-disciplinary study. I believe that these are worth mentioning, considering that another aim of this research was to recommend that other theatre-makers staging the experiences of the criminalised society in South Africa should also conduct immersive, cross-disciplinary research in order to understand how certain representations of violence and the experience of living in the criminalised society can cause their audience members or cast the trauma of re-victimisation.

5.2 Findings

One of the research aims that this study intended to address was providing a comprehensive overview of theatre's engagement with the various identifiable experiences (and responses to) living in a criminalised South Africa. However, there were certain practical limitations to my ability to access certain forms of theatre that were outlined in Chapter One. Additionally, as the research progressed it became evident that the methodology chosen for this study was not the best-suited approach to acquiring the kind of data required to comprehensively understand the dynamics of South African theatre's staging of the experiences of living in a criminalised society and how these stagings are produced and received. It became increasingly apparent that my decision to use formal and informal reviewers as key sources of information rather than gathering empirical data myself restricted my access to quantitative data about the plays regarding audience attendance, audience reception, and audience response. It was an intention at the outset of the research to analyse the plays in terms of commercial success, but once it became apparent that I did not possess the data to make such an analysis, it also became evident that commercial success was not necessarily relevant to the research aims of the study.

Another research aim of this study was to develop alternative conceptual frameworks for analysing contemporary South African theatre that would avoid the conventions of existing apartheid and post-apartheid theatre studies. One of the methods I used to do this was to make use of theoretical frameworks used in criminology and sociology to describe and analyse South African society and citizens. These were then adapted to describe the fictional experiences of the characters in the sample of plays according to the existing terminology for their experiences in criminology and sociology. It was observed that contemporary South African theatre studies, much like the rest of South African society, will have to make use of terminology inherited from apartheid for a while longer in order to track the transformation across the discipline.

Furthermore, this study intended to map the demographics of the theatre-makers producing plays engaging with the experiences of living in a criminalised society in order to understand which perspectives were being represented and which are not. This study did not address this aim, however, as the demographics of theatre-makers are not accurate denominators of which cultural, racial, or religious groups are being represented and which are not. Theatre-makers, while intrinsically influenced by their group identities and environment, do not necessarily produce their theatre to reflect these influences. Blumberg's assertion that theatre-makers should make use of their medium to reflect the experiences of previously subverted voices does not indicate that a research undertaking such as that suggested in

the above-mentioned research aim would be of any benefit to the theatre-makers or to those whose voices were previously subverted. It was an assumption at the onset of this study that this research aim would contribute to the efforts in theatre to unearth and express difficult or traumatic experiences had by those previously denied the opportunity to engage others with their stories; however, it no longer appears to be of benefit.

The cross-disciplinary research into criminology and the nature of the crime wave in South Africa discussed in Chapter Two uncovered a field occupied with many complex problems and responses that influence all spheres of society and that demonstrated that violent crime is a very serious problem facing society that requires interventions from all sectors if any significant change is to be made to the levels of risk of potential victimisation. It also revealed that the 'crime wave' and fear of crime in South Africa has more to do with perceptions built on interactions with the mass media, interactions with others, and individual attributes than it does with actual victimisation or risk of victimisation. The quantitative evidence also revealed that despite a lowering of some crime rates, South Africa is undoubtedly a criminalised society and one of the most violent states in the world not locked in a war or large-scale conflict.

South Africa is considered by some to be a very violent society with numerous forms of violence affecting individual's levels of safety and fear. However, the criminology and victimology research, as is discussed in Chapter Two, makes a clear delineation between violent crime and other forms of violence. The assertion of criminologists and epidemiologists is that the problem of violent crime must be thoroughly investigated and understood in order for law enforcement, the justice system and the public to effectively combat the high volume of criminality in South Africa. The research does exist and it is comprehensive and easily available on the internet on platforms like the ISS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, making it easy for South African citizens to access and inform themselves about their true risk of potential victimisation in a criminalised society and what measures they can employ to effectively protect themselves.

There are, however, potential negative aspects to conducting research of this nature into the crime wave, criminology and victimology for artists or theatre-makers. Firstly, the data relating to the crime wave are largely presented in the form of statistics that are then analysed and interpreted by criminologists, the presentation of which is often not user-friendly to those who are not familiar with the field of criminology. Secondly, in my experience of conducting immersive research into this field over four years, I reached a saturation point on more than one occasion where the seemingly endless stream of violent crime statistics, reports, and discussions became overwhelming and distressing, requiring

me to then distance myself from this cross-disciplinary research for weeks at a time. There may be more efficient methods of engaging in this immersive research, but as an individual with film and theatre training it was my experience that the *remembering* (Carlson, 2003) elicited by consuming large volumes of data about crime and its effects on individuals over an extended period of time (longer than two months) caused some emotional distress.

5.3 Conclusions

It has been stated that theatre-makers should be wary and considerate of the ways in which they choose to represent the experiences of those living in a criminalised society, as there is evidence that in a transitioning society such as South Africa there is a strong likelihood that a member of the cast or the audience may have been the victim of a violent interpersonal crime, particularly considering how high the rate of violent crime is in South Africa. It therefore follows that theatre-makers could potentially re-traumatise these individuals by the way in which they portray experiences of living in the criminalised South Africa. Blumberg, Flockemann, Anderson and Menon all suggest that artists take cognisance of their own complicity in the messages conveyed by their work and take responsibility for presenting violent crime and fear of crime in a way that contributes positively to the public's interactions with these social phenomena.

This study had aimed to uncover trends in the theatre-making process of the plays under discussion, but the research focused instead on the perspectives of the criminalised society represented in the plays and how these were staged. No definitive conclusions have been drawn since the range of sample of plays is now considered too limited in relation to how numerous and varied the experiences of living in a criminalised society are. The impressions provided by the reviewers of the plays did not lend themselves to the process of drawing even tentative conclusions about the body of work in contemporary South African theatre staging the criminalised society.

There is no one perspective of what violent crime is in South Africa, how it affects people's day-to-day lives or whose responsibility it is to 'deal with' violent crime. In fact, these issues tend to resist unification, which is why there has been no tangible difference (as far as South African society at large is concerned) in violent crime rates in the country. Therefore, it is important to note whether or not the range of diverse responses to these issues are reflected in the theatre productions that chose to deal with these societal concerns. What is typically the case is that theatre-makers are writing from their own perspective or the perspectives that they are personally familiar with. The exception to this rule is Lara Foot Newton with *Tshepang*; this play took months of immersive research, interviewing local residents of the

Northern Cape and becoming familiar with their way of life and their point of view. Both of these methods of scripting/play-writing are conventional, but it is of concern that there is a prevalence for the first, when one considers the fact that certain demographic groups of South African society are not producing original plays dealing with living in a criminalised society; this means that their demographic groups' voice on the subject is entirely muted and their perspective is left unexplored. It was my intention to provide a detailed overview on living in a criminalised society as reflected in the theatre productions being produced by that society, but this task has been made impossible by the inability of this study to represent all sectors of South African society's experiences living with crime. It can be argued that South African society is simply too diverse for a single study to ever include everyone's perspective, but I believe that we have a responsibility to be as inclusive as we possibly can.

5.4 Recommendations

I would recommend, based on these conclusions, that further interdisciplinary research be undertaken to understand how contemporary South African theatre is articulating the various experiences of living in a criminalised society and how different theatre-makers approach the process of writing and staging plays engaged in representing these various experiences. Further research would benefit from a variety of perspectives based in a variety of disciplines in order to properly understand a phenomenon that is indisputably interdisciplinary. I would further suggest that a forum be created where South African theatre-makers and scholars can discuss the influence that specifically violent crime and living with the fear of potential victimisation can have on individuals and whether or not, as South Africans, we should employ a rating system to warn audiences of potentially disturbing content. I believe that theatre-makers could benefit from engaging in a more immersive and rigorous process of script-writing and/or theatre-making as means of reflecting the complexity of many of the societal concerns of a transitioning country such as South Africa – including violent crime and living with crime.

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